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A Contribution to the Psychological Understanding of the Origin of the Cowboy and His Myth

by

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Myths have been the object of keen interest and study for a very long time. Almost exactly one hundred years ago, Adelbert Kuhn published his treatise on comparative mythology. This was followed by extensive research work by such men as Miller, Roth, Cohen, Murray, Perry, to name a few. It was Freud, however, and his followers, notably Abraham, Rank and Jones who showed that myths, like dreams, represented wish-fulfillments of repressed childhood fantasies. This viewpoint is still ignored or rejected by many authors, while others, unable to advance any convincing alternatives, simply (and honestly) say that they do not know.

It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the existence of the cowboy myth, nor its importance. Some may question its respectability and its worth. Be as it may, the cowboy, his guns and his horse are deeply imbedded in the minds of people, here in America and abroad.¹ Of particular significance is that the cowboy myth is less than one hundred years old, it is widespread, and there are still cowboys living today. There is an abundance—almost an excess—of informa-

1. A not unusual notion abroad is that American is synonymous with cowboy.

tion about him: historical, social, economic, anthropological, political and some psychological.

In the review of the literature on the American cowboy, I have deliberately selected data with the criterion used in the preparation of a psychiatric case study. There are several reasons for this approach. Most important of all, a chronological integration of data had to be made in such a way that the cowboy's history would proceed from reality to fantasy, from past to present. In this way it is possible to trace a psychologically significant parallel between the history of the cowboy group and the psychiatric history of a cowboy patient. A comparative study is made possible and the ensuing relationships will then permit us to follow the development of the myth from its origin.

What may appear to be an arbitrary selection of data is further complicated by the fact that extreme care has been taken to cover every aspect of the cowboy's historical background. A good, thorough, "case history" was essential to compare the group with the individual. A discussion of the psychological principles involved in the myth is not intended, since the subject of myths has been dealt with extensively in the psychoanalytic literature; rather, ample proof is afforded to what has been studied and described by the application of these principles to the cowboy myth in particular.

EARLY BACKGROUND AND ENVIRONMENT.²

On his second voyage, Columbus brought the first cattle³ to the New World. Some forty years later the cattle reached the mainland. The cattle drifted and multiplied and by the

2. Unless specified otherwise, source of material will be found in *The American Cowboy* by Frantz and Choate. (1).

3. Originally from the land of Iberia (now Spain), its origin is lost in prehistory. Possibly related to the bison (Altamira paintings, 20,000 to 10,000 B.C.), the famous "black bulls" were sold in Crete and bought by King Solomon, and thrived under Iberians, Tartessos, Carthage, Romans, and the Moslem Empire through Christian times to our present day. The role of the bull in mythology is well-known to all.

middle of the sixteenth century, the first arrived within the present boundaries of the United States. By sporadic leaps and bounds, partly tamed and partly wild, the "longhorns" eventually reached Texas. By 1821, the area between the Rio Grande and the Red River was teeming with wild cattle. Columbus also introduced the horse.⁴ It gradually developed into the tough, strong and intelligent mustang of the cowboy, "the natural-born cow-horse." So much for the cow and the mount.

The myth of the American Desert was well established by the nineteenth century. It held all the fears and dangers of the unknown. This was the cradle of the cowboy. At the end of the Civil War, Texas found itself on the defeated side, the land untouched by the ravages of a cruel, internecine struggle, but its people dazed and impoverished. At the time, a natural resource seemed to be the answer to their plight: cattle.⁵ It could bring untold wealth if it could be taken to northern markets. In the face of boundless obstacles, the cattle trails began to appear through the "Desert."⁶ It was on these trails that the cowboy was born, and according to historians, it was also on these trails that all the cowboy myths developed. He worked on the trails for a maximum of thirty years (mostly between 1870 and 1885) during which he and forty thousand other cowboys headed out somewhere with their herds. Although they came from all over the plains, Texas was the most representative State for the cowboy.⁷

4. Introduced into Spain by the Arabs over a thousand years ago.

5. Estimates ran that in the Nueces Valley alone there were from three quarters of a million to three and a half to four million cattle.

6. The railroads roared through, "since to stop in a country in which there was only grass and desert would have been fatal, because there was nothing to stop for." The Great Desert, the Plains, of limitless horizons, covered with rolls of green grass, broken by blobs of scrub tress, cut by occasional streams, was a region that the Anglo-American saw as beyond his personal or ancestral experience. (Frantz and Choate) (1).

Author's note: Numbers in parentheses refer to references listed at the end of the paper.

The group into which he moved was exclusively male. There was the drover, who bought and planned; the trail boss cared for the individual herds and organized the trailing operations; next came the cowboys who worked under him, usually young men in their late teens or early twenties. The cook was the undisputed boss on the trail, one of the highest paid and usually the most exposed to Indians. He was the realist of the crew. Last of all came the horse wrangler who cared for the riding stock. He was usually a boy.⁸ The trail had no room for women.⁹

THE COWBOY ON THE AMERICAN SCENE

Originally from Texas, (2) the cowboy became a product of the third quarter of the nineteenth century. He herded large droves of cattle along trails leading to mid-Western gathering points, where the cattle was sold and shipped to Northern and Eastern markets. In reality, there were no species of cowboys, they were "merely folks, just plain, every-day, bow-legged humans." (3) His dress and appearance were born of necessity, from his life on horseback, exposed to the rigors of the climate (*e.g.*, high-heeled boots to insure against slipping in the stirrups; the chaps to protect his legs from injury; the neckerchief to cover nose and mouth when riding behind cattle). Philip Rollins wrote that physical injury, in the form of hernia, was ordinarily caused by bucking, and allowed to the average man but seven years of active riding.

The gun—the famous gun—weighed two and a quarter

7. "Considering that the first American herds were Spanish in origin, and most of the technique and equipment of the American cowboy of Mexican origin, the Nordicism in the cowboy stereotype is difficult to explain. So is the chauvinism. It was not American money that turned cattle raising into big business; . . . investors were in London, Aberdeen and Edinburgh." (Marshall Fishwick) (9).

8. "Little Joe, the wrangler", who never saw his mother in the fall.

9. Hough did include such an element in his *North of 36*, to the distaste of a host of otherwise wholehearted worshipers.

pounds, plus the weight of the ammunition. The average puncher was unwilling to go "heeled" (armed) to the extent of "packing" (carrying) a gun, unless it was absolutely necessary.¹⁰ Those who carried guns invariably, the "killers", no doubt belonged to the criminal group found in all societies, the so-called "psychopathic killer."

Not unlike the soldier and sailor, loneliness and constant male companionship drove him to spend his wages "turning loose" as he called it, on drink, women ("the soiled doves") and gambling. These excesses sometimes ended in tragedy.¹¹

Women were scarce in the cattle country, which called itself "the country in pants." It is not surprising that cowboys were unmarried and, in fact, conditions were such that it was difficult to get married. Some of the women living on ranches prepared special and tasty meals which not only gave the ranch a gastronomic reputation but also made the cowboy acutely aware of the extent of his deprivations. These women engaged in competitive housewifery and many of them rode extremely well. The cowboy, however, did not like females who were masculine-mannered.

A peculiar code of honor developed in the cowboy's relationship to other men and women. We shall see later how it was incorporated into the myth. Under the Western code, no cowboy who drank with another cowboy, could kill him

10. He wore a gun when he might expect an attack from a personal enemy, when he was near the Mexican Border or in country with hostile Indians, and even when riding on the range, if dangerous animals were reported in the area.

11. "... two cowboys ... concluded to paint the town red, and proceeded with a promiscuous firing of six-shooters at the principal hotel ... shooting a bystander ... both made their escape ... the sheriff ... collected an armed posse ... (the cowboy) fell mortally wounded and died shortly afterward."

"A cowboy who made an unsuccessful attempt to run a Kansas dance at Ashland ... a promiscuous shooting began, resulting in the death of (the cowboy). "*Leavenworth Times*, August 14, 1885.

Sumner County clipp. VI. pp. 284-5. "Drunken cowboys kill girl at Hunnewell." Kansas Hist. Library, 978.1-Su6 Clipp.

for a grievance. A horsehair chain, woven from the hair of horses' tails, was used to carry a watch in the vest pocket. It was axiomatic that the female doted on horsehair chains and, according to Philip Rollins, the cowboy would figuratively lasso her with a tiny lariat made from the discards of his favorite pony's tail. This author adds that in the cowboy's mind the gun was a necessary accompaniment of love-making and as effective on the female heart as the sword of a young soldier.¹²

In his vest-pockets he carried Indian arrow-heads or "elk tusks", the most treasured jewels of the Indian squaw, because of a vague, boylike idea that some day they might be useful. A woman, when riding alone on the range, was as safe as though in her own house. Violation of this code meant the hang-knot or the "staking out." The latter ceremony consisted of cutting the culprit's eyelids off, facing him to the sun and laying him on a large-sized ant-hill. His wrists and ankles were tied to pegs in the ground. In this way the victim was to lose in a few minutes his mind, and in a few hours the final vestige of his flesh.

THE TRANSITION FROM REALITY TO FANTASY

In the last quarter of the last century, beaten by the fences from which his forebears had already fled once, mostly the cowboy retreated and fled into the ranch where he still exists today. He lost his guns and proceeded to blossom out into an increasingly popular and widespread myth. Some ended more ignominiously by cowboy standards: such as the case of fifty cowboys from Garden City, Kansas, who were sent to Minneapolis to become street-car drivers. (5) "We hear the hoofbeats passing, boldly and steadily still, but growing fainter, fainter, and more faint." (Emerson Hough) (6)

12. The cowboy's gun actually had plain wood in its stock and the metal was black or dark blue. The novelist changed it into ivory or mother-of-pearl with a nickel-plated barrel. He did not notch his gun; this again was the novelist's idea.

By this time, the cowboy became classified into three groups: (1) the vagabond, coming into the ranch in spring and fall, "riding the grub line," (2) ruffians, drafted from the cattle-yards of the Eastern markets and (3) cowpunchers, who still led lonely lives, except when living in the camp. These had their counterpart already in the myth. Every cowboy of the novel fitted squarely into one of the three species created by novelists. He was portrayed as: (1) clownish, reckless, excessively joyful, noisy and profane; (2) wolfish, scheming, sullen, malevolent, prone to ambush and murder; (3) dignified, thoughtful, taciturn, idealistic, with conscience and trigger-finger accurate, quick and all freighted with weapons, terse in utterance. (Philip Rollins)

(3) In fiction, the cowboy was converted into a veritable arsenal. He began to wear long hair.¹³ He sang his way more and more into ballads of a mournful tone, lamenting the lost woman, distrusting love. He drank less and less. He wore silver spurs and galloped on his horse. He pursued or was pursued by the villain. Finally, he came from nowhere and returned to nowhere.

THE MYTH.

According to sources consulted, the cowboy on the frontier boasted, griped, roamed without cease and mistrusted personal ties. This was expressed poetically in *Herding cattle over the Chisholm trail* by the statement that he never made a journey without a continual, torturing heartache and sense of exile, for every man draws into himself into his shell. He was the image of the motherless man, the man without roots, the womanless man, who, above all, can only trust his horse and six-shooter Colt. The cowboy hero, Olympian¹⁴ and Homeric, had his origin in the very brief appearance of the cowboy on the American scene, twenty five years of hard and faithful labor. In the words of Emerson Hough, the cowboy

13. Like Samson; see Karl Abraham, *Dreams and Myths* (10), pp. 193-194 for a discussion of this.

14. See Harry Schein, *The Olympian Cowboy* (7).

can be found today but he is no longer the Homeric figure that once dominated the plains.

The cowboy's reputation spread from settler to settler, thence to the press¹⁵ until the writer and novelist used him for countless stories and novels. There was a time when it was fashionable in the East to travel West by train and gawk at the cowboy, no doubt with the hope that he would make a fast draw with his gun and kill. He was an object of envy, admiration and fear. Eastern visitors would even pay for the privilege of watching him work. Frantz and Choate report that in the frontier days he had kicked up enough dust in Kansas, dressed outrageously and caused enough trouble in his sporadic visit into large cities, to rush into print with enough memoirs of all sorts and hues to get his fame or notoriety broadcast to almost every country in the world. The cowboy had realized that his days were over.

It was and is the motion picture industry that exploited him and sharpened the myth to a fine point.¹⁶ According to Schein, in the article *The Olympian Cowboy* (7) the "Western" movie gives us the unique opportunity to experience the creation of folklore. He states that the rigid form and repetitive theme of the movie gives the contents mythological weight and significance. In 1955, Frantz and

15. " . . . sensational correspondents for the city journals . . . have written . . . have made him (the cowboy) a perfect desperado—so much so that mention of the name "cowboy" strikes terror to the heart of men, women and children everywhere . . ." *Kansas Cowboy*, Vol. I, Dodge City." *A good word for the Montana cowboy*." August 2, 1884, No. 48, p. 7.

16. "Every fourth Hollywood movie deals with the American West, and many of these are circulated around the world." See Fishwick in *The Cowboy: America's Contribution to the World's Mythology*. (9)

For those interested in statistics (books; novels; movies, etc.,) see Frantz and Choate. (1) These authors top the field of cowboy literature since they are the only ones who have attempted to see the cowboy in relation to the entire western panorama. I am greatly indebted to them.

Choate wrote that "the desire to deify the cowboy seems to infect even the most normally disenchanted observer. Moreover, it cannot be denied that the cowboy myth does exist, that it is fundamental to an understanding of the cultural content of American life nor that it is real." But these authors also add that "there is no answer to the cowboy myth yet and that the answer will not be found anywhere." To this statement, one would have to say with Erikson that its explanation calls for a collaboration of historian and psychologist.

Today we have the masses of the people,¹⁷ repetitively and compulsively, watching "Westerns" in movie theatres or on television screens.¹⁸ Schein describes the reactions of the audience beautifully when he says that the spectators feel the power of the gods, experiencing the same thing time after time with a ritualistic passivity similar to a congregation at divine service. They have no wish for something different and unfamiliar, but a need for something old and well known. It is a hypnotic condition that has the same bewitching strength as an incantation: the magic of repetition. Freud called it the *repetition compulsion* or the need to re-enact painful experiences in words or acts. For what the individual

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17. From "the manifestation of the intimate relation between dream and myth (that) entirely justifies the interpretation of the myth as a dream of the masses of the people." See O. Rank *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*. (8)
 18. Fishwick says that it was a story Americans wanted to hear, time and again: a story which, after endless repetition, began to be accepted not as a story, but as the truth about the cowboy. Recently, *Time* magazine published the following: "Shotgun in hand, six-shooters at his sides, Wyatt Earp rode on the highest saddle in television: third place in the latest Trendex popularity ratings for all United States network television. Earp symbolizes a pack of horse operas that thunder in growing numbers down the channels of television. The three networks liked this season's sixteen Western series so well that they have already scheduled twelve more for next fall. This is the biggest visible trend for the new season and independents are hopefully breaking in fifty other contenders." *Time*, vol. LXIX. No. 9. 3-4-57.

experiences in the process of seeing the myth theme is an unconscious arrangement for variations of an original theme which he had not learned either to overcome or to live with. He tries to master a situation which in its original form had been too much for him by meeting it repeatedly and of his own accord. This is but one characteristic of the cowboy myth, the spectator's relationship to it. The theme of the myth affords temporary relief in that it incorporates the wish-fulfillment of childhood fantasies.¹⁹

The mythical hero of the cowboy novel or pulp magazine is invariably presented as a superb horseman, an expert on the fast draw, a dead shot with the Winchester, always on the side of justice and brave beyond question. He defends virtuous women. He is the enemy of the Indian. Honor and integrity come naturally to him. Opposing him is the "bad man" with all the vices and treachery imaginable.

Fishwick commented that the Nordic traits and chauvinism in the cowboy stereotype are difficult to explain. One answer to this comment can be found if we consider and discuss briefly Owen Wister, who was the first novelist to popularize his cowboy heroes.

According to Mody Boatright (*The American Myth rides the Range. Owen Wister's Man on Horseback*) (14) one reason why the cowboy is a popular hero is that he possesses two qualities: prowess and cleverness, the latter being the defense of the weak against the strong, the practical against the ideal. Moreover, he adds, in the folklore of the United States, prow-

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19. According to Fishwick, the American cowboy has come to symbolize a freedom, individuality, and closeness to nature which for most of us has become a mere mirage; hence he can serve as a safety valve for our culture. When things get too bad, we slip into a movie house, or into a chair with the latest cowboy magazine or novel, and vicariously hit the trail. We become free agents in space and time. He then says, "As I sat in the movie house it was evident that Bill Hart was being loved by all there. . . I also wanted to be loved—to be a little dreaded and feared, too, perhaps. Ah, there goes Sherwood Anderson! Treat him with respect. He is a bad man when he is aroused. But treat him kindly and he will be as gentle with you as any cooing dove." (9)

ess is associated with the South, cleverness with the North. To some people, the cowboy was innocent and good, to others he was righting wrongs with no thoughts of material rewards. But others believed that the cowboy, removed from the restraints of home life and religion, necessarily degenerated. They thought of him as of a barbarian whose only recreations were physical violence and drunkenness.

Boatright points out that Wister made his cowboys into natural gentlemen. Thus the Virginian had to improve himself by reading Shakespeare and other classics before he was a fit husband for Mollie Wood. Good women were not mentioned in levity since gentlemen were not supposed to boast of their sexual exploits. But above all, Wister emphasized the code of honor. The author then adds that in spite of a good number of shootings, stabbings, and lynchings, physical violence was not abundant. (!)

Wister is the man who introduced the cowboy into the literature and novel, because his was the first hero who received popular acceptance and acclaim. Thus from man to myth. The process and origins are psychologically enlightening and further contribute to our history.

Boatright describes the disappearance of old myths and the need for a *new mythology*. The Great American Dream was one of a nation in which all men might enjoy a comfortable living. It was shattered by sectionalism, civil war, and the rise of a socially irresponsible plutocracy. If Theodore Roosevelt applied the theory of evolution to history in his *The Winning of the West*, Wister exemplified it in his Western fiction. According to Boatright, an important factor in Wister's admiration for the culture of the cattle country was his belief that it permits the law of natural selection to operate freely.

Boatright maintains that Wister shared the contempt for the masses inherent in the doctrine of social Darwinism. Wister's pathetic search for a leader brought him to the conclusion that Theodore Roosevelt was the greatest benefactor known to Americans since Lincoln. Be as it may, Theodore Roosevelt himself made no small contribution to the creation of the cowboy myth.

Wister did not stop there. He firmly believed in the myth of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority which proclaimed that this

race was destined to rule this world under God. It was destined to do so because of its genius for politics and its moral purity. Wister admitted that the Mexican was the original cowboy but claimed that the American improved on him by taking only what was good from this despised alien. This included his name *vaquero*, which was translated into cowboy.

By the time that Wister got around to writing his first novel, the West he knew had gone. He always insisted that *his fiction was historical*. (Italics mine)

Boatright concludes his study of Wister with some comments which arouse some speculations in my mind. They concern not only Wister's philosophy, which would certainly merit a psychological appraisal and study of its own, but also some of Boatright's misgivings about the cowboy hero. He says that it is not altogether reassuring to see the cowboy with his six-shooter, his simple ethics, and his facility for direct action as America's leading folk hero. In addition to the remark about the cowboy's facility for direct action, Boatright's understatement of all times that violence is not abundant, strongly suggests a disquiet stemming from the unconscious, namely the never-ending gratification of the death wishes exemplified in the theme of the cowboy hero.

With the advent of the motion picture industry some fifty years ago, the "Western" came into being and has flourished since then. The movie-goers became fascinated by the theme. With a rigid, repetitive, ritualistic screenplay, the myth of the cowboy hero found its finest exponent in the movies.²⁰

The hero stands alone in the little community. He seems never to have had a mother or any family ties. The action often takes place in the period immediately after the Civil War. He is often a Southerner and his opponents are Northerners.²¹ He is opposed by bandits. The leader is usually older, rich, often to all appearances a respectable man with corrupt political bosses. He usually lacks a wife, but may be a widower, now and then with a daughter. A struggle will arise be-

20. For an excellent description of the mythical hero see *The Olympian Cowboy* by Harry Schein. (7)

tween her love for her father and for the hero. The latter is surrounded by a good woman and several saloon girls, who either sing about love or dance the cancan. He does not drink, and if he does, he is always sober. He is timid and shy with women. He is unwilling to use the gun. There is always a saloon fight. It may be with fists or guns or both. The saloon is left a shambles.²²

The good woman is usually blonde and a specialist in making apple pie. The bad women are the kind one goes to bed with. Sometimes the bad woman turns out to be a good woman. The treacherous shot may kill her, but she thus shows her innocence and finally helps in destroying the enemies of the hero. He shields women but he does not marry them. He may brutalize bad women or the bad ones who turn out to be good.²³ If a triangle drama develops (two men and a woman), the men become good friends and they realize the woman is not worth having. When given his choice, the hero chooses his horse or gun instead of the woman.

The weapon is often the center of the action. The owner is unconquerable. The gun shoots endlessly. It is never reloaded. The hero draws his gun faster than the bad man. In the end, the horse and the gun are the only objects worthy of trust and affection.²⁴

Schein points out that since World War II, three modern variants of the mythical theme have appeared. According

21. Occasionally the hero surveys the destroyed home of his parents in the opening scenes. The death of the parents is conveyed symbolically. Schein says that Uncle Sam, powerful and hated, is like a father figure. The hero reverses the outcome of the Civil War, taking revenge for the defeat of the South, but the revenge is still illusory.
22. This is what Frantz and Choate have to say about the fist fight: fighting with fists on foot was demeaning and not for white men. The cowboy was not trained to use his fists. The magnificent fist fight which leaves the saloon divested, the onlookers exhausted, and the participants blood-stained is almost strictly a product of twentieth-century imagination. Schein makes the interesting comment that in one country abroad, it is these fist-fights, amazingly identical in their pattern, that were cut out of the film by the movie censorship board.
23. The movie *Duel in the Sun* is a good example.
24. Using Fishwick's own words: To his code, his horse, and his catle, he is faithful to the end.

to him, it reflects America's newly-acquired dominance and primacy in the world. Unconscious enmity toward women finds stronger and more direct expression. The villain gets more sympathy and he adopts a favorite position, leaning against a wall, teetering on a chair, half-sprawling, with hands on hips and the pistol in a clearly discernible phallic profile. He is the victim of injustice or misfortune. He must die, but as a rule he dies happy.

The heretofore unpsychological "Western" becomes the object of special psychological creativity. In the movie *The Gunfighters*, a middle-aged and unglamorized gunman is forced to kill in self-defense. He flees, but his reputation is swifter than he is. He kills and kills. Though he is tired of it, he is not allowed to live in peace. Finally, there comes a man who draws faster than he can. The gunman dies, filled with relief but also filled with pity for his murderer: he is doomed to kill or be killed.

In the movie *High Noon*, the hero is newly married. He wants peace and quiet. His wife is opposed to killing. But duty and justice force him to fight and kill, in spite of the fact that he must suddenly stand completely alone, abandoned by his wife and the community he must protect. In the end his wife takes a gun and saves him from death. Surrounded by the grateful community, he scorns them and drops his badge to the dust, and he rides away with his wife.

In the movie *Shane*, the hero with a mysterious past comes to a valley of farmers that is ruled by powerful cattlemen. He is dressed in leather, cartridge belt and gun. He is a gunman who seeks peace and a new life. He lays away the trappings of the gunman. He becomes good friends with a husky farmer, his pretty wife and a twelve-year-old boy. The farmers' situation becomes unbearable and they are ready to move away. A hired killer is in their midst, terrorizing and killing. The hero is forced to get his gun and kill the murderer, and then he has to leave, losing all hope of a peaceful life.

His relationship to his friends and the boy is revealing: between the hero and the woman (boy's mother), the atmosphere is tense with fear and eroticism, but only her husband can give her security. The boy has unbounded admiration for the hero and convinces him to teach him how to shoot. The mother is upset and reproaches them both. The hero is forced to knock the boy's father unconscious to prevent the father from challenging the killer. The boy's confidence in the hero

is shaken by this act but he finally accepts the hero completely. The boy follows the hero unnoticed and witnesses the gun battle and death of the killer. He then prepares to become the hero's heir.

Schein believes that, more than any other Western hero, Shane is the mythological figure: his entry and exit are god-like; he is a suffering god, whose noble and bitter fate is to sacrifice himself for others.

In fact, a recent critic in *Time* magazine (22) said that in the current rage, the old horse opera has been fitted with a new handle: the "adult Western." It would seem that the old genre has come of age. In movies the adult Western goes back at least as far as John Ford's *Stagecoach*. On the air it owes its start to the radio version of *Gunsmoke*, which began in 1952. The children's Westerns use as a source of material for their scripts Stuart N. Lake's biography. One critic called it a fictionalized glorification of a tinhorn outlaw. It has been, nevertheless, the major sourcebook for Westerns since 1931.

THE PSYCHIATRIC CASE

The following case of a cowboy who was seen by me in an outpatient service for a psychiatric evaluation, gave me the opportunity to examine closely the nature of his problems. Moreover, his difficulties were such that I had no difficulty in gaining his full acceptance. I was impressed with the degree to which his history and his emotional conflicts reflected the history of the cowboy group and certain aspects of the cowboy myth. I have had to omit certain data which enhance the similarity, such as his name, to protect his identity. His name played a very important role in his phantasies and in reinforcing his process of identification with the cowboy hero of times past and with his unknown natural father. The close relationship between the patient, the cowboy group and the myth is however very clear.

THE PATIENT: A COWBOY UNDER STRESS

He is a white married male, in his late thirties, living with his pregnant wife and two small children in a mid-

Western city. He is a cowboy without a job, depending on public welfare to support himself and his family. A psychiatric evaluation was requested by the welfare department to determine whether he was fit and able to hold a job and work. His appearance and demeanor are those of a typical cowboy: tall, lanky, large-boned and sandy-haired, with the visible residual signs of an injury caused by a relative with an axe when he was two years old. He wears a greasy, worn, black cowboy hat; he has long sideburns framing a weather-beaten, sharp-featured face. From the scarf to the high-heeled boots, all is tight-fitting. He sits awkwardly but more often stands, thumb in broad belt, body weight resting on one foot.

The patient was nine months old when his father died of flu. The mother remarried when he was three. There were several siblings and half-siblings. Throughout his childhood years, the family moved around in different states almost constantly. Poverty and strife characterized their existence. The step-father was a "mean, hot-tempered individual who beat the kids up." The patient left home when he was eleven years old and never returned except on rare occasions to see his mother. These visits were very brief. He was drafted into the armed forces during World War II, but he was rejected for unknown reasons (probably for illiteracy).

Because of protracted drouths in the mid-Western states where he had worked since his teens as a cowboy, and because of post-war changes, he found it increasingly difficult to find a job as a cowboy. He had always worked as a ranch-hand, whenever possible choosing to work with cattle and horses, spending much time on the range. This is what he loved and enjoyed.

After the war, in his early thirties, he met and married his present wife. She attracted him "because she is an able-bodied woman who could ride a horse well and do a man's work." (She is a typical maternal figure, nevertheless, as we saw her during the evaluation.) Driving by his inability to find a job to his taste, he came with his family to a mid-Western city. He had several jobs for short periods of time, but said he could not hold them because of malaise, general-

ized aches in the limbs and "bad teeth that poison my system." A dental examination confirmed the presence of decayed teeth, gingivitis and poor oral hygiene. He showed no interest in following dental recommendations in spite of his opinions to the contrary. Repeated physical examinations, laboratory studies and X-ray films failed to show any significant findings. Symptomatic medical treatment was given. He was placed on public welfare financial relief for several months. He refused job placements because of his symptoms until finally he was referred for a psychiatric evaluation with the indication that he might be a malingerer.

Psychological tests consisted of interview, the Mosaic Test, Human Figure Drawings, E-T-P Test, Rorschach Personality Test and the Raven's Progressive Matrices Intelligence Test (non-verbal). Findings from these examinations were that the patient was a very dependent individual with only superficial defense mechanisms to cover up his dependency. Intellectually, he falls within the range of "dull average." Anxiety is handled through hostility and aggression. There is an element of childishness and primitiveness with a contrasting wish to be independent. There are signs of depression and indications of strong impulsivity. He has strong conflicts over unresolved sexual identification. He leans toward extreme dependency upon the mother figure (his wife at present). His cowboy garb, "he-man" talk, and search for outdoor masculine type work, represent his deep striving for masculinity. This clinical picture emerges from his feelings of hostility toward his step-father and his inability to accept his deep need for his mother. His life is reflected in his earliest recollections: that of being hurt, physically injured and scarred by an axe. His present symptoms may be related to his inability to find ranch work and his inability to care for his family which threatens his masculinity. In reaction to the extreme stresses he feels in a new and unfamiliar environment, his choice of somatic symptomatology is at present limited to his teeth. He feels that their removal is vital for his renewed health.

The diagnosis was that of an adult situational reaction

in a passive dependent type, recently precipitated by exposure to city life and more remotely to increasing poverty in a rapidly changing post-war social and cultural environment, with fast disappearing elements for positive identification.

During his psychiatric examination, the patient overcame his initial anxiety expressed by anger toward "city folks" and the welfare department in particular, by sharing his rolled cigarettes with the psychiatrist. As he became more confident in himself and warm toward the examiner, the infantile traits of his personality became obvious. Feeling accepted by a male figure on whom he could depend no doubt contributed to a better ability in presenting his life history. He believed that he was a homeless man. When pressed for memories of his home, a painful subject, he stated that his father had died when he was a baby. The stepfather was described as a cruel, mean man who treated the patient like a dog in spite of his attempts to help him and like him. "I tried to help the old man but he didn't like me; I don't know why." The stepfather brutalized the mother. The patient was unable to discuss the mother, refusing to recognize her: "I never asked her for no help."

He ran away from home at the age of eleven and never returned except for some rare visit with his mother in later years lasting a short time. He left because he could not stand home any longer. Thereon he became a cowboy, spending as much time as possible outdoors, with cattle and horses. "I love them . . . they are my life and my hope." This man's love objects have been animals, particularly the horse. If permitted to do so, the patient would talk enthusiastically, poetically with passion, about his cowboy existence and had to be interrupted each time to come to another subject. He carried guns on the range (two Colts and a rifle) to shoot rabbits. He was proud of the guns. In like manner, his tight-fitting clothes and boots were hotly defended stating that "if your clothes are loose, your life would be at stake (riding horses)."

He had never thought of marriage until he met his present wife whom he admired because of her strength and

ability to do a man's work. She was also a fine horse rider. He heatedly denied reports of physical mistreatment of his wife and children. He was barely able to conceal his strong feelings against his children. Moral concepts were centered around hurting women or children; transgression was abominable " . . . a man should never hit a woman, I don't care how bad she is." The present times are seen as bewildering, and he feels that he should die if everything changed and that he should have lived a hundred years ago. Present-day life is seen through "smelly sewers, speeding madmen, horse-killers who use the meat for dog food, police who have no regard for peaceful folks; men fly without having been given wings by God." Modern foods are seen as repulsive; there is a yearning for the "good old food." "I had privacy and I have lost it; now you get swarms of cops." He is uncertain and fearful about the future and looks back longingly toward the past.

This cowboy could only be helped by returning him to his people and his environment. With this in mind, recommendations were made that he go back with his family to some state where he could obtain a job as a cowboy.

THE COWBOY, INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

A comparison of the history of the cowboy and that of the patient has many points in common. An individual must share many psychological traits with the group with which he is identified. Moreover, the group, in its birth, development, prime and disappearance will go through many of the same vicissitudes of the individual. In the discovery of common psychological traits and factors one can not only trace the origin of the cowboy, psychologically, within the society in which he lives, but also explain some of his most representative emotional conflicts. In addition, when a myth develops from this particular group and the individual is made into a hero with whom a very large proportion of his society is identified, we are in a position to confirm a psychodynamic formulation. The selection of the cowboy as a hero by his society is determined in great measure by the fact

that he alone, and best of all, gratifies most fully certain unconscious needs present in his admirers. The subject of hero-worship is beyond the scope of this paper, but the use of worship in the compound word already denotes the intensity of the emotions involved. It could be said that the quality of cowboy-worship is implicitly contained in the intensity and breadth of the development of the cowboy myth by the masses. We are primarily concerned with the myth in the United States, but there are probably not many people in the world who are not familiar with the figure of the cowboy hero.

No man or group can make itself into a hero or myth unless its society does so.²⁵

The following history emerges from data common to both the cowboy group and the patient:

The existence of the parental home is denied because it is too painful to recall. The parents were in strife and the son suffered humiliations and physical punishment at the hands of the father figure. The mother is an ill-defined person. The home situation becomes so unbearable that flight takes place. An errant, wandering existence is taken up, away from people into a vast, unpopulated area. The cattle and horse become the objects of interest and affection. Weapons are also worthy of pride and become necessary for protection. The years are spent in loneliness and hard work. Human companionship is only sought on certain occasion and is most commonly male. Infliction of injury to others must be avoided, women in particular. Injury to her will bring about swift, deadly punishment. With the passing of time, privacy becomes increasingly difficult. People begin to spread over the open land, announcing radical changes. Industry and mechanization render the horse less useful and the means for subsistence are lost. Fences appear everywhere and the land is no longer open and free. Under these inexorable external pressures, the cowboy retreats into the ranch lands and begins to disappear.

The very people who destroyed him are fascinated and yet fearful of him. They see something heroic and different in him.

25. See Rank, (8) p. 81 and Abraham, (10) pp. 208-209.

FORMULATION AND DISCUSSION

I

In his consideration of the American identity, Erikson in *Childhood and Society*, (4) calls attention to the rapid, intense changes in American history in a land settled by men who fled from patriarchal tyranny, who refused to be "fenced in." The presence of these men is maintained by a steady, large flow of immigrants.²⁶ The women were faced with a tremendous task: they had to share with and support his freedom from patriarchal despotism and in so doing they had to take the father's place to evolve a new tradition and yet it was also up to them to become autocratic, to establish order. The "male" superego was displaced by a "female" superego.²⁷ Puritanism represented the superego prohibitions.²⁸ Thus, within the family setting, the original intolerable father-son conflict was replaced more and more by a mother-son issue or "tension," as she gradually shared with father's place and finally took over, establishing a new, matriarchal autocracy. This reflected itself culturally and historically in her political emancipation from patriarchal dominance at the turn of the century. Erikson wrote that the mother stepped into the role of grandfather as the father abdicated his place in the family, in education and in cultural life.

26. In 1860, the total population of the United States was a little over thirty million. From 1860 to 1930, just on thirty million immigrants came to the United States. In 1940, of a total of 118 million white Americans, about 11.5 million white Americans were foreign-born and 23 million were of foreign-born parents. Geoffrey Gorer, *The American People*. (12)
27. It is quite obvious that there is no such thing as a "male" or "female" superego. This term is used arbitrarily and is justified in that it attempts to reflect the predominant superego model, father or mother, exclusively in the aspect of the source of cultural and social conditioning.
28. "... some excuse had to be advanced for such carryings-on (raising hell) in a nation where blue laws had a tendency to hang on, and the ghost of Calvin still stalked the land. An ample (excuse) existed in the effects of loneliness." Marshall Fishwick. (9)

Erikson then adds "that behind a fragmentary *oedipus complex*, appears the deep-seated sense of having been abandoned and let down by the mother, but at the bottom of it all is the conviction, the mortal self-accusation that it was the child who abandoned the mother." Where father got the blame, now it was the mother who was accused.

If we can accept Erikson's interpretation of the dramatic family evolution on the receding American frontier, our attention can be focussed back to the period of the Civil War. It is not difficult to see that in the loser's heart, all the fears of patriarchal domination and tyranny were reawakened. The conqueror, the hated Yankee, could only represent the potent, powerful father. Had not the mother taken his place at the son's demands? To many, only an old, time-tested solution remained: to leave the home and let the father claim his own. There were other solutions no doubt, but among those who chose to leave must be counted the young men who created and became cowboys.²⁹ In the reawakening of the father-son oedipal conflict, no doubt latent castration fears and guilt over incestuous wishes toward the mother resulted in adding fuel to the real fear of retaliation, always in the mind of the vanquished in war. A retreat to purely masculine activities with objects for easy masculine identification provided a solution for the castration fears. The incestuous wishes toward the mother, deeply repressed, with the addition of the "female superego" (prohibition of oral gratification and instinctual appetites) must have been shaken to its very foundations.

An upsurge of such sexual strivings and resulting conflict with the superego could only result in the compromise of the cowboy: to stay away from women.³⁰ He could protect them if necessary but not marry them. Thus, sexual transgression with a virtuous woman (virgin: mother) could only

29. "At the outbreak of hostilities (Civil War) the total number of cowboys was probably small; most of the early men had been Mexicans. But the cowboy came back with a bound after Appomattox; the two decades that followed were his golden years". (9)

bring upon him the damnation of the "female" superego and the castration by the father. This is symbolized by the "staking out" punishment for rape: the eyelids are cut off (castration) and the body (phallus) is eaten up by the ants. Added protection against both threats from the father and the mother are symbolized in the cowboy's charms: the arrow-heads or "elk-tusks" and the miniature lariat made from the hairs of his favorite pony's tail.

The Civil War soon became a thing of the past (notice the persisting hostility of the South for the North), the nation surged forward in peaceful progress and the mother of the freedom-loving son resumed her autocratic position in the family: there was no longer reason to fear father. Flight was no longer necessary. The cowboys, after their golden years were over, persisted in an established cultural trend but only in small diminishing numbers representing scattered family dispersions, if not settling down to family life on a ranch. He never regained his former social status. The dudes and the greenhorns were there to remind him of this.

This tentative psychodynamic interpretation of the cowboy's historical origin will in turn introduce us to a consideration of the myth.

Freud stated of the Oedipus fable that all of us, perhaps, were doomed to direct the first sexual emotion towards the mother, the first hatred and aggressive desire against the father; our dreams convince us of the truth. (*loc. cit.* in *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* by O. Rank.) (8) Deeper and more

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30. Unlike most old-time cowboys, (the mythical Pecos) Bill also had a regular girl, Slue Foot Sue, who is prone to ride down the Rio Grande on a catfish, demonstrating that she is a true girl of the West. The interpretation of this female figure is left up to the reader.

According to E. C. Abbott, there was only one thing a cowboy feared as much as a decent woman (*italics mine*) and that was being set afoot. (*loc. cit.*, Frantz and Choate, *The American Cowboy*) (1)

Dr. Henri Ellenberger has kindly pointed out that I should call attention to the fact that the cowboy's respect for women was true only for white women.

extensive knowledge about the dream process made possible the interpretation of the hidden meaning of myths. Thus Abraham in *Dreams and Myths*, (10) could state that the origin of these myths springs from the sexual fantasies of mankind in that the myth is a surviving fragment of the psychic life of the infancy of the race whilst the dream is the myth of the individual; but the adult, confronted with all the exigencies of human existence craves the ministering mother who took care of all his needs in childhood. Reik, (21) in still more precise terms, mentions that as in the dream creation of the individual, so in the mythical output of the masses, a fragment of submerged psychic life rises to the surface in an age subjected to different cultural conditions and struggling against harsh necessities.

The study and interpretation of a particular myth (going from the universal to the regional) will require that certain fundamental factors be taken into account, namely what Arlow defines in *The Legacy of Sigmund Freud*, (11) as the types of pressures (punishment or reward) which the child-rearing practices of a specific culture bring to bear on the developing instincts of the child which will in the long run influence the nature of the character structure of members of that society. The conflicts over infantile sexuality, especially the oedipal wishes, must be resolved in a fashion consistent with the ideals and standards of the particular community. Different conflictual possibilities (fixations) can arise from the oedipal phase of the child's development. This will depend upon the attempted resolution of internal and external pressures to which the ego is exposed in relation to the mutual child-parent relationship. The predominant superego model will play a decisive role. In other words, particular aspects (fixations) of the total oedipal situation will be found in common among certain groups of people in contrast to other groups. Of this controversial point, Ausubel has said (15) that notwithstanding the fact that it is true that a unique personality type for a given culture can be valid only for substantially homogeneous cultures and that uniformity of parental attitudes within a given cultural or sub-cultural area cannot be assumed, on the basis of certain

differentiations, a certain uniformity can be distinguished.

Inasmuch as the cowboy myth is representative of the wish-fulfillments of a particular community, group or culture, it will reflect certain aspects of the oedipal fixations present in that culture. Like Oedipus, the cowboy succeeds; "... but his success is his undoing. He fails to find what, in one way, he sought, yet from another point of view his search is brilliantly successful. The same ambiguities surround his effort to discover who and what he is. He seems to find that he is nothing; yet thereby finds himself." (Francis Fergusson, *The Critical Performance*). (13)

II

A further and now total and complete comparison of the cowboy's history, the patient's history and the myth will reveal many similarities. Since all three are closely connected chronologically, one has the opportunity to observe how the productions of fantasy in a myth stem from reality but will eventually change, losing all apparent connections with their origin. The increasing distortion of the reality roots would supervene under an increasing approximation and adaptation of the mythological elements to the unconscious wish-fulfillments shared vicariously by the individuals in the community.³¹ Therefore an attempt to determine the nature of the wish-fulfillments in the cowboy myth will require a selection of those elements which are clearly not historical and purely productions of fantasy. In addition, it can be seen that the selection of the cowboy by popular imagination for its mythical hero is due to the fact that he provides the best material for the elaboration of the fantasy. This would explain why other popular figures have not been developed into such a widespread myth.

The major elements of the fantasy are as follows:

31. An excellent example of rationalization to explain and account for the astounding and increasing popularity of the cowboy stories on television will be found in a recent number of *Time* magazine, vol. LXIX. no. 9. p. 65, 1957.

The hero has no home and comes to a small community where he is opposed by bands whose leader is older, richer, with all the features of respectability. He is never married. The enemy may include a vicious killer. The enemy may be beaten up in fist fights or killed in gun fights. The hero does not marry and rejects the pleas of the virtuous woman who urges him to give up the gun and stop killing. The gun of the hero is unconquerable, shoots endlessly and is unerringly accurate and deadly.

III

The interpretation of the cowboy myth will require that we examine in the first place the manifest content which will then permit us to approach the unraveling of the true or latent content of the myth. Since all myths have a common source in that they express deeply repressed and forgotten fantasies and wishes centered around the oedipal conflict, the same elements will be found in the cowboy myth. It has been shown that the very earliest myths known to man showed little or no disguise of their content. With the passing of time, an increasing distortion of the original meaning occurred. Since we consider the cowboy myth to be in a state of relatively rapid change, like the oldest myths, in some aspects there is but very little symbolization. It requires little or no interpretation to realize that the hero represents the son who is challenged by the father and the siblings, who are defeated and killed (removed: made to disappear). In fact this is the popular idea represented in novels and stories about the cowboy, where the love for freedom, independence and virility of the cowboy is stressed over and over again.

Such an obvious interpretation will then show us that there are present in the myth an abundance and a true display of masculine, phallic symbols with an apparent total absence of feminine ones. (For typical symbols see Mullahy.) (16) It is as if the female were minimized or denied, almost a complete denial and repression of the mother figure. For instance, both the hero and the opponent or "leader" are unmarried. Further consideration of the manifest content shows that the hero's origin (birth) is unknown (denied)

and that his gun (phallus) possesses certain qualities: it is prominently displayed, accurate, never misses, never fails to shoot, requires no loading and is deadly. The potency of the phallus is astounding! It is not only the means to remove the opponents but it does so by firing ("It drills holes" or permits one to see the "daylight" through the victim's body, in the vernacular of the cowboy).

The woman not only plays an insignificant role, but more often than not, several vague, poorly defined, secondary female figures are present. In most instances, the virtuous woman is the local representative of culture and the educator.³² Whatever the romantic element, it is the soul of brevity and decency (compare with novels and movies on unrelated subjects) with the stereotyped request after one of the hero's particularly dramatic killings, that she will only marry the hero if he gives up the gun and stops killing. The choice of the gun and the horse above everything else, and close attachment to them, suggests a close identification with a masculine (father) symbol. We can thus dispose at the manifest level of the major components of the myth.

At this point, it is well to realize that the myth possesses different, deeper levels of significant material, some of which elude our interpretation in the quest for the total interpretation, insofar as it is possible with the available material.

There is one puzzling figure that attracts immediate attention: the "leader of the opponents," who is older, rich and respectable. At first he seems to represent the father figure, but certain details and characteristics raise doubts and questions about this assumption. We can say, tentatively, that he is the father figure plus something else. His respectability is but a front torn down and exposed by the hero. He is the boss of the community but also in cahoots with corrupt individuals. He is not married, and is often a

32. Fishwick makes the forceful statement that the hero's wooing of the pretty schoolteacher is a twist damned to eternal repetition in the hands of fabricators of horse operas.

widower, sometimes with a daughter (usually a "wildcat"). All the leader's killings are done by hired bandits. He is unarmed and most commonly carries no weapons. The hero will beat him up but not kill him. The outcome is the duel to the death with one of the leader's hirelings, often treacherously done and displayed by the killer, with the familiar ending: the sad, forlorn disappearance of the hero around the bend or over the horizon.

These are the questions that one must ask about the leader: why is he older and rich; why is he unmarried; why must he hire killers and not do the killing himself; why does he not carry weapons and use them; why the "mutual respect" between himself and the hero; in addition to father, what else can he represent or symbolize?

So far we have dealt with some symbolic interpretations at a superficial level.

Some of the earliest discoveries of Freud demonstrated that to circumvent the censor that will not tolerate the direct expression of secret wishes in dreams, a certain process of "dream work" takes place. Among the first elements discovered in the dream work is symbolic disguise. In the words of Abraham, the analysis of most myths is rendered more difficult by the symbolic disguise of the intrinsic content. Therefore their true meaning or content must differ from their outward presentation. It is precisely the interpretation of the intrinsic meaning of the myth that is least acceptable to even the most sophisticated people.

Moreover, as Abraham also points out, one difficulty in analyzing a myth is the fact that we have to make use of comparisons and associations to enable us to understand a psychological structure created thousands of years ago. As I pointed out at the beginning of this paper, the recent origin of the cowboy myth obviates this difficulty in great measure. In addition, the same author adds that in these visions and dreams, the contained wish-fulfillments can only be understood in the light of the whole case history.

I shall also mention briefly two other well-known components of the dream work: condensation and displacement or secondary elaboration. These are also found in the formation of the myth.

In condensation, one element, be it an object or a person, represents several elements condensed into one because of common attributes; for instance, one event can represent several ones. Separation of displacement and secondary elaboration in the myth is difficult because of the time lapse. (Abraham) (10) Both of these elements tend to "invert the values" (Freud) in the myth, so that the most important features are relegated to a least important place, and the emotional stress is displaced from the significant to the insignificant.

In the final analysis of a child's psychosexual development, certain aspects or emotional vicissitudes remain constant and are universal for all mankind. Among these is that the mother is the potential source of all comfort and pleasure, toward whom the boy will express and attach his phallic affection. Another is that he will discover in the genital sphere that the mother is vastly inferior to the father who is the possessor of a phallus like himself. He is faced with the tremendous problem of solving his love for mother and hate for the father in a manner tolerable and acceptable, since he realizes by different means that he cannot express and must give up these instinctual urges. It is no mean resolution that will at times haunt the individual throughout the rest of his life. He will not be aware of this consciously. The resolution of the oedipal conflict with the introjection or incorporation of the parents and superego formation will make capital at this stage of the parental attitudes and, by extension, of their own conflicts, roles, moral values, etc. It is here that environmental factors will play a decisive role also, without of course modifying in any way the fact that at this stage the child has within him the most intimate experiences of the first crucial years of his life.

The leader

It is with the above considerations that we can return to the enigmatic "leader" of the opponents of the hero in the cowboy myth. We suggested that he represented father plus something else. We will see if we review the cowboy's history and that of the patient, and recall what the manifest

content of the myth holds with but little interpretation, that one recurring theme is outstanding: that of clearly and directly expressed feelings toward the father; fear and anger with scarcely disguised fulfillment of his death or disappearance in the myth. The role of the enemies of the hero as siblings and of the "leader" as a father figure is captured even by the layman and popular imagination. This suggests immediately that there is no censor at work, no need to elude it or that these wishes can be expressed with little or no conflict. Its conscious expression denotes not an absence of the father-son conflict but rather a tolerable acceptance of it.

At this point I am certain that the reader will come to the next conclusion before he reads it, namely that what is deeply repressed, what the censor will not allow free expression, are the incestuous wishes toward the mother.

Evidence in support of this conclusion, will again be found in the review of the cowboy history, the patient's history and the myth. While she must be definitely present, the female or mother role is to all appearances quite absent; more still, there is denial, flight from, isolation from, protection from and absence of the mother except for very ill-defined, secondary female characters. We must, however, conclude that she is present somewhere, (in considering how deeply repressed the incestuous wishes toward the mother can be, I am reminded of one particular instance where an outstanding American professional man said in public that he certainly could accept the fact that he detested his father but that he could not discover in himself any desire to kill his father to take his place in his mother's bed. I do not know, however, if he is a cowboy fan).

It must be concluded, therefore, that if the "leader" represents the father at one level, he symbolizes the mother at a much deeper level. The extreme disguise and distortion is accountable not only on the basis of symbolization but also of condensation and displacement. It is only by the application of these components that we can clarify the puzzl-

ing nature of this "leader" and answer some of the questions raised heretofore.

The common attribute between the mother figure and the "leader" figure is that both lack the penis. The "leader" has no weapons, he cannot kill, he does not have the power and has to hire killers. Inasmuch as the "insignificant" women are concerned, their role is not only minimized but, in addition, a process as if it were the opposite or reversal of condensation occurs (decomposition), namely, the mother figure is broken up into several females (the virtuous, the bad woman who turns good and the sexually promiscuous), lacking any eroticism or sexually stimulating roles in the novel or cowboy movies.

The emotional tension and excitement is always centered around the chase and duel. By displacement and secondary elaboration we can then account for the fact that all the chasing, dueling, galloping and "drilling" of holes directed at the mother is displaced off onto the "enemies." The most direct expression tolerated on occasion, is the thrashing or beating up of the "leader" by the hero. This can also be interpreted as representing sexual aggression (coitus).

Thus in one act, it is almost as if the hero could thrash his father and have intercourse with the mother at the same time. (The condensation of the mother and father in one figure is a process made familiar to us in mythology through the studies of the Sphinx.) The "mutual" respect between hero and "leader" (not killing each other) would indicate a special relationship, the nature of which is thus revealed above.

We are unable to interpret the characteristics of "older and rich." We do not know of any particular symbolic meaning, except to suggest that it may represent "weaker and more desirable."

The Enemies and the Killers

In the consideration of the manifest content of the cowboy myth, I pointed out that the hero inevitably "shot it

out" and killed his enemies. It is not uncommon to have among these a vicious killer, the man who flaunts his weapons "in a clearly discernible phallic profile." The cowboy drama reaches its climax in the duel scenes, usually presented in a ritualistic form: both men stalk each other in deserted streets or buildings and, in the closing in for the death, slowly walk toward each other. The manifestations of sibling rivalry are well portrayed in the succeeding elimination of the "slower-drawing" enemies, thus fulfilling the unconscious wish for their removal.

This interpretation can well satisfy us at this level but the form of the death ritual with its stress on one particular weapon and the portrayal of death in the freest use of the imagination calls for a closer scrutiny and demands further interpretations. Two things are remarkable: the ritual itself and the gun. The ritual calls for an orgiastic climax where the emotional elements are centered around stalking, chasing with a sudden stillness and slowing down of the pace: in the movie the sound track goes dead, at the most, footsteps are heard, a slight crunch of the heel on the ground. The hands and the gun are displayed in close-ups, commonly a round, dark, huge orifice staring in the face of the spectator. A sudden roar shatters the silence and, with the maximum use of sound suggesting violence, the guns fire and the enemy slumps down. The slumping body, jerking arms or legs, melodramatic collapse or flight of the body through the air from some stairs or a balcony, ends the climax.

The weapon is always a gun, never a knife or blunt instrument. In fact the hero just does not knife someone or beat his skull in, no matter how many chairs or bottles may be innocuously shattered in the bar for the good of the mounting climax and inevitable end. It is always a gun. (Compare in unrelated movie themes the exhaustive use of every form of killing imaginable.)

The act of killing with a gun, a weapon whose characteristic feature is to fire, was called in cowboy jargon "drill-in," likewise closely associated with the terms "bumping off" and "knocking off." The expressions used to describe

the death-dealing effects of the gun represent unmistakable sexual symbols. What is significant, moreover, is the particular use and exploitation of this weapon to the exclusion of all others, and the words used for the act of killing.

The verb to drill means in common language to pierce or bore or to sow seeds in furrows or holes; to bump means to strike, thump, to collide with or cause to collide: notice that it implies a forceful physical contact; in slang "bumping and grinding" is used to describe the sexual gyrations and movements of the pelvis during a parody of intercourse (as applied to strip-teasers). The verb to knock means to strike a resounding blow; to drive or be driven against something; again physical contact is implied. The expression to knock up, means to arouse by knocking; in English colloquialism, it means to tire out or fatigue; in English slang it means to have intercourse (tire out or fatigue a woman).

The elements of drilling by fire stand as man's oldest sexual symbols. (8 and 10) Money-Kyrle, (17) states of the Prometheus myth that the fire drill is a phallus, the fire god who is invoked by lovers; men invoke him for virility, women belong to him; the reed with the fire in it is the paternal phallus, and the fire making is the blasphemous imitation of the divine or paternal act of generation. He adds that we can well agree and conjecture with Frazer that the man's duty was to twirl the fire stick and the woman's to hold the hollow board in which it twirled.

Additional implementation to the striking symbolization of sexual intercourse in the cowboy death ritual is afforded by the custom of *notching the gun*. This was a product of the novelist's imagination: for each man killed, a notch was made on the gun. Symbolically it can only mean one thing: an incision on the phallus, an act of mutilation. Why the mutilation, the symbolic act of self-castration for the death of a man? It is due to the arousal of guilt feelings for the death of the father, and consequent act of self-castration and punishment as an atonement for the crime. We have seen already, however, the level at which the death wishes toward the father are fulfilled.

At the deepest level it represents the childhood fears of losing the penis to the mother. "If you give the penis to her she will keep it because I have found out that she does not have one." The deeply repressed desire to possess the mother sexually is fraught with the fear that because she is weak (*i.e.* without a penis and 'castrated') she will keep his penis as a symbol of power that she lost. Further on, however, I give the reasons in particular as to why the mother should wish to keep the son's penis (in the boy's mind). In addition, the feared castration by the mother without the penis incorporates the oedipal component of punishment for desiring and possessing her. Thus, all the elements contained in one act, the notching of the gun reflects the consequences of possessing the mother sexually.

Symbolization of sexual intercourse has yet to be accounted for. We must explain the fact that armed men, not women, are killed with a gun, and that the ritual and mode of death symbolizes intercourse. This sexual act with another individual possessing a penis, suggests an aggressive homosexual act on the father.

Since we can assume with Brenner (18) and others that no really strong libidinal cathexis is ever completely abandoned, anal intercourse symbolically present in the myth is not surprising in the light of certain sadistic tendencies for, as we shall see later on, homosexual and heterosexual, sadistic and masochistic emotional trends overlap, inextricably blended. This process is accounted for in the myth by the child's own psychic elaborations, for the observation of sexual intercourse between adults causes the child to develop anal sadistic-masochistic fantasies.

An even deeper meaning exists and additional interpretations must be made to understand why in the cowboy's death ritual, "the object of intercourse" is a "passive" victim, *i.e.*, conquered and killed, even if it resists and attempts to retaliate. No matter how many shots are made at the hero, he is not only invulnerable, but the victims collapse all over the scene like so many slaughtered lambs.

We must now recapitulate again and bear in mind that a special relationship exists between the "leader" and the hero's enemies, including the hired killer when he is present.

The manifest content of the myth showed them to be rivals or siblings; at a deeper level they represent but "leader" surrogates: multiplied once or a thousand times, they stand as the leader's representatives. We have also shown briefly how at this level the "leader" typified the mother and how, in the myth, the incestuous wishes toward her are the most repressed and disguised of the infantile wishes. We can therefore suspect that the man is the mother with the penis, the victim of the assault. For if the father can be the displaced sexual object because of the terrible threat of the mother as the sexual object, a further process of a regressive nature would suggest the mother with a penis of the pre-phallic stage of development. But with the enemies, as in the case of the leader, we have an instance of condensation of both parent and figures. The leader can be compared to the Sphinx *whose phallic attributes are less obvious*, and in fact the enemies represent the same symbolization, for the leader, like the Sphinx, *portrays two people in the act of intercourse* but, unlike the Sphinx, *he is not killed*. The killing of the Sphinx is really a distortion of myths where father is castrated when he is in the act of intercourse; but *the armed surrogates, the enemies, are killed*, and represent not only the phallic mother with the father's penis, *but also a combined figure of the father and mother in what the analysts call the primal scene* (Money-Kyrle; all italics are mine) and, as Reik puts it, in the legend of the Sphinx, sexual intercourse and murder synchronize in one act, affecting one object.

The thematic repetition of the mother figure, *of father and mother during intercourse, is in fact the central nuclear conflict of the entire cowboy saga. The mother without the penis cannot be killed, and anything suggesting or approaching her destruction is the abomination of the cowboy (to the young child the loss or threat of the loss of the primary love object)*. The mother with a penis can be destroyed.

Our interpretation cannot stop here. We have so far interpreted the central nuclear conflict. It now remains to explain why the primary love for the mother is subjected to such a deep process of repression. Indeed, why is the discovery

of intercourse between the parents so particularly terrifying? In fact, why the elaborate disguise and distortion? Why does the discovery that mother has no penis and father does, seem to be so threatening?

The Oral and Sexual Taboos

For the present, one last matter will be considered, although the interpretation of the cowboy myth and its manifold components is far from exhausted.

The cowboy hero does not drink or smoke, in sharp contrast to the other men, and if he does drink he is never intoxicated. Eroticism in any overt form is likewise absent and in fact he seems to be the mirror of chastity and sexual abstention. We shall again have to recapitulate and go back in our "case study," and later discuss the cowboy's conscience or superego. We shall examine in particular the problem of the predominant superego model and the passing of the oedipal complex within the cowboy setting and culture. This will account for the oral and sexual taboos.

The rapidity of social and historical changes in the United States cannot be overemphasized. If we limit ourselves to the cowboy phenomenon, the changes are even more startling. At the time of his birth on the frontier, after the Civil War, the world was a hard one for men but even harder for women. Her basic elements of life had to be created, a home built and a peaceful community was still something distant, to be dreamt of. With nothing at her disposal, she had to create a secure, peaceful environment for her children. Little wonder that the frontier woman has been called heroic. In addition to the traditional weight that she bore as the bearer of tradition, she had to establish a new one, for her children already had that of freedom. The toll and the price was terrible in the number of women who died leaving widowers, even if today America seems to be full of widows. Many things have changed in the past one hundred years. Men were shiftless, footloose, lived much like animals and it was the women who suffered the consequences.

Brogan, in the *American Character*, (19) says that it was not surprising that it was the women who supported

the missionaries who came into the wilderness to preach against drink and fornication, for stable marriage, for literacy, for those bourgeois virtues that the middle West then needed so badly and is only now rich enough, settled enough, secure enough to begin to think it can despise. This author adds that the revival meeting, orgiastic, anti-intellectual, often ludicrous, was as necessary to the organization of a stable society in the middle West as the steamboat that could move upstream from New Orleans to St. Paul.

The impact of the Civil War on American life cannot be exaggerated, even if nowadays the ideological content has been reduced to a trace. One crucial issue stood out: the unity and the future of the great interior valley in which the immigrants from Europe and the Eastern coast would be molded into a new American people. It was the triumph of the freeborn son and of the mother, freed once more from the threat of patriarchal domination. The successful termination of the great western movement was a decisive moment in world history. As for the South, it persisted with its bitter sense of defeat.

On this background, like a brilliant shooting star, the cowboy came and went.

History was made, the country became unified and the American woman began to clean up America. She campaigned successfully against organized prostitution, against liquor and against ignorance. Men tried to have it both ways: license for themselves and rigorous moral standards for the women. American women played a great part in establishing American society and they intended to play an even greater part in the future. It was at this time that the cowboy myth began to flourish in the novel; then came the movies and so to our own generations. The cowboy has never been as popular as he is today. Imagine the surprise, the shock and the incredulity of the plain, every-day, bow-legged creature watching one of our "Westerns" on a movie or television screen!

The saloon and the brothel will continue to challenge the American woman's passion to reduce man's disorder and moral anarchy to reasonable limits. These masculine traits

stand as the greatest threat to her social and economic security. It also became her major concern to combat man's inclination for war and lawlessness. To her credit, and to her growing and deserved power, must be ascribed the attitude that it is a proper and fitting thing to renounce war. But two World Wars confirmed the truth enunciated by Mr. Dooley, that you can refuse to love a man, you can refuse to play with him, you can refuse to lend him money but, if he wants a fight, you have got to oblige him.

So much for the sociocultural basis of the oral and sexual taboos.

(No drinking and no fornication, but yet)

Across the plains where once roamed the Indian and the Scout,
The Swede with alcoholic breath sets rows of cabbage out.³³

But what of the psychodynamic process reflected in the hero's myth? What are the consequences of the mother displacing the father's place in the family, for the sake of peace, to maintain man's freedom, not against the brutal father only, but against his own instincts?

The mother became the model, the family figure representative of all the moral (superego) values. She becomes, in particular at the crucial age of superego formation, the omnipotent figure as the virtual head of the family, *in every aspect but one*, for if the son has already observed the "primal scene", it is now that he discovers that she does not have the penis; father has it.

Some interesting light was shed on this point in a recent paper by Rubenstein and Levitt. (20) They investigated the reason why the American father of children brought to psychotherapy seemed to play such a secondary role. They comment that it must be apparent that general confusion exists in the minds of mothers, as well as fathers, regarding the familial role of the father. Cultural research portrays a stereotype of the American father who turns over all parental responsibilities to the mother except the learned one of providing support.

33. Quoted from Dennis W. Brogan, *The American Character*.

The authors then state that on the basis of their own suppositions, buttressed by the evident cultural determinants, they were led to expect that in many instances, the castrating and feared figure would emerge as the mother. This seemed natural to the authors in the light of the social contrast between the ineffectual figure of the male and the seeming dominance of the female. To the surprise of the authors, this hypothesis did not hold. Their impressions led them to believe that *the father continues to maintain the prerogatives of the primal father in the son's unconscious* (italics mine), no matter how reversed the family roles or dominating the mother figure.

This unexpected supporting confirmation of our interpretation of the "enemies" of the hero, in that we pointed out that the mother with the penis was not the nuclear conflictual figure³⁴, as represented in the cowboy myth, also highlights the decisive question that no matter how dominating the mother role, she is still "weak" in one aspect: she does not have the penis and father, in the child's discovery that he has, becomes or remains to be the primal father. Nevertheless, this very important point requires some additional clarification.

To restate what we have just said, the conflict arises precisely from the fact that in spite of the mother's primary cultural and familial role, the father continues to be the primal father because he is nonetheless the possessor of the penis and the mother is not.

It can be readily seen that in any culture the child has

34. This is a crucial point in my interpretation. As much as I would like to, I cannot go into the problem or the dynamics of the castrating mother with the penis and the castrating mother without the penis. It is beyond the scope of this paper and the reader is referred to the psychoanalytic literature on this subject. He will no doubt appreciate the existence of several obscure points that demand further clarification. My interpretation should not be construed as minimizing the importance of the mother with the penis as a castrating figure in the boy's mind: my interpretation is limited exclusively to the cowboy myth.

to go through the vicissitudes of the oedipal phase; it may involve the natural parents or the surrogates; where in addition, he has to contend with a patriarchal family, he has the added burden of having to deal with the ever-present, powerful figure of the father, but where the tendencies are matriarchal, *precisely as a protection against this father figure*, he will have the additional burden of *having to deny that his mother is not as powerful as he believes, as he must believe, nor as strong a protection from his father as he must contend*, for, if by necessity he must identify himself with him, acceptance of her as the omnipotent figure with all its moral standards, attitudes and attributes must be brought about with as total and as thorough a repression as possible of any elements that remind him of her "weaknesses," particularly with regard to his father and himself. Hence a primary or basic fear of a phallic or castrating mother with a penis cannot be involved, *but rather a fear of a weak mother, of a mother without a penis. The "weakness" is precisely where he wishes her as his sexual love object in competition with father, where he is the possessor of a penis like father and she is not, her weakness when she is sexually possessed by the father.*

She in turn must strengthen his "belief" in her and reinforce the sexual prohibitions of childhood in her role of pacifier and protector against patriarchal tyranny. In addition, she must protect from father a son who himself is a potential one. The need for mutual exclusion of the sexual attachment between mother and son, and in addition of the pre-phallic love of the son for the mother as the primary love object, (where mother sets up the oral prohibitions also to protect herself against her own incestuous wishes) is clearly portrayed not only in the cowboy's history of flight from home and mother, but in the history of the cowboy patient. "He doesn't owe her a thing and she means nothing to him anyway." He has to struggle against his intense desire to depend on her again as a small child and finds that he has to intensify constantly his masculine strivings, for if in his mind there is the memory of a castrating father, taking his

place altogether in his quest for freedom, will inevitably confront him with the mother as the desired sexual object of childhood, weak, powerless, at his mercy.

In the myth, the cowboy has to repress any orality, any dependency on the mother, but more, the mother has to be totally absent and denied.

The Manifest Motives in the Theme of the Myth.

In closing the foregoing consideration of the origin of the cowboy myth and its interpretation, it is quite obvious that the material is not only far from exhausted but in fact deserves much more extensive study, particularly in tracing the development of the cowboy myth and its relationship to other myths.

Among others, Dr. Henri Ellenberger has pointed out several, very interesting unsolved problems. For instance, although the Boer has his own myth in Holland and France, conditions in South Africa were comparable to the conditions in the Far West and yet a type of man like the cowboy never developed. A comparison with the *gaucho*, the Mexican cowboy *Chaparro* and others from Central and South America would be desirable. In the present paper, a study has been made of the hero, in the light of psychoanalytic knowledge. The next logical step would be to make one of the killer or *desperado*, since both have common roots in the cowboy of the golden age. The bad man myth is also a very real one, and seems to form part of a dichotomy in which the cowboy hero represents all the "good" and the desperado, all the "bad" of the historically real and true cowboy.

An earnest attempt has been made to center the present study on the origins of the myth, to determine how the historically true and real roots undergo a gradual process of selective distortion and disguise by means of well-known unconscious mechanisms.

A presumably enlightened movie director who has decided to make true, authentic cowboy movies, recently declared that the cowboy's attachment to his horse was a lot of nonsense. The most important thing to a cowboy was his hat!

That the process of selective distortion and disguise is collective, that is to say the product of the masses, can be grasped from the moment that we conceive of the decisive, universal, emotional relationships that exist between every child and its parents, no matter what variable environmental factors may be introduced.

One last question at present deserves additional thought, but no attempt will be made to answer it. It is certain, however, that any attempts to do so will eventually lead us back to the latent content of the myth. It is simply this: what is the reason given or the justification made for the killing in the cowboy theme? In the screenplay it is often conspicuous by its absence, but in cases where it can be detected, it is usually one of these: the hero has the reputation for being the "fastest-drawing gun" and therefore he has to protect his reputation and kill; he is a reputed killer made into a hero; he seeks revenge for the death of the "kid brother" or the "good old pal"; he just comes into town to kill "for the heck of it"; he arrives and kills because the community has asked him "to clean the town"; he comes and is mistaken for another but it so happens that, unknown to all, he is a notorious gunman; and so forth. Briefly stated, the reason is barely discernible and, if at all, serves to introduce the familiar story, *for in fact it would be quite difficult to find a good reason to justify the story.*³⁵

It is interesting to note that in so-called "adult" Westerns, of recent vintage, a serious effort is being made to develop a more "psychological", real or historical type of movie, but in so doing, the myth is further modified and

36. (page 49)

35. "In Westerns of the new TV variety there is a conscientious effort to distinguish one character from another, furnish at least rudimentary psychological motivation for the violence that in earlier Westerns went unexplained. Rather than mounted Iagos, their villains frequently are diagnosed as chronic alcoholics, paranoids, megalomaniacs or just plain juvenile delinquents." Reprinted from NEWSWEEK magazine: Vol. 1., No. 4., p. 53 *Just Wild About Westerns.*, July 22, 1957.

changed. What is being done unconsciously is precisely the very opposite.

The increasing "mythification" and disguise of the unconscious signification of the cowboy saga in present-day themes can be confirmed by watching any of the numerous Western movies shown in the local theatre. Schein noted the increasingly open hostility shown toward the women in the type of role portrayed. We observed this recently in a most dramatic and even revolting fashion: in this particular Western the role of the sheriff was played by a woman who falls in love with the killer. The grand finale takes place precisely where both met for the first time: she hunts him down and slowly kills him shot by shot while he pleads with her in the name of their love and he deliberately misses her.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The histories of the cowboy and of a cowboy patient are presented in a case-history approach and form, to determine from past to present and from known to unknown, the psychological origin of the cowboy and his myth. A selection of psychodynamically significant data has been made to establish the intimate connection between cowboy, patient and myth, thereby shedding light on the latent content of the myth. Psychoanalytic knowledge of dreams and myths is not only applicable to a modern myth but suggests the need for a more thorough study of our own myths in contrast to other more remote, older and removed ones.

The interpretation of the cowboy myth confirms the presence of universal and regional characteristics, found in all myths, no matter at what stage of development. These are found at the different levels of interpretation. At present, the cowboy myth in its form of manifest denial of the female or mother figure, represents the intense childhood desires for her and the fears attending these desires, namely that gratifying these wishes carries with it the implication that she is weak and powerless in the face of father, in a culture with matriarchal tendencies stemming from a freedom-loving son who has fled from patriarchal dominance and tyranny. It would account for the fact that what is feared is not the

"castrating," penis-possessing mother but, on the contrary, the weak, powerless, possessed and sexually-dominated mother without the penis.

Attention is called to the fact that the myth was born of a period of great historical significance in the world, of a time when men acted like beasts, family life had to be firmly established, and radical changes had to be made for survival. What was accomplished by other peoples in decades had to be accomplished in weeks and that, furthermore, it involved the greatest migratory movement known to man: the most favorable conditions for the creation and establishment of myths. In addition for the vital and urgent need for rapid change, a constant flow of immigrants has maintained alive the goal for freedom from tyrannical, autocratic, patriarchal systems. This inevitably placed an additional, formidable load on the already present, traditional ones of the woman and mother. That she is suffering from some of the consequences of this load is apparent to all.

The cowboy myth is in anything but a stable form and is undergoing steady change, particularly since World War II. Its definite form is worthy of speculation, likewise its eventual disappearance at a time when our culture and society will lose some of its present characteristics, for instance that of being an immigrant nation and the country reaches its population saturation point.

Several objections, and no doubt very good, valid ones, can be advanced to question the method of approach and the collection of data. Not the least of them is the fact that we are dealing with an extremely fluid and heterogeneous society, that life and family conditions are too variable to assume common, unconscious factors, shared vicariously by such different subcultures. That such wide variations exist is a matter of common knowledge, but the very real existence of the myth in itself points to the presence of deep, extensively shared, psychological problems of an identical nature.

Conversely, I wish to point out that because it is human for every age to consider itself the most civilized and progressive, I seriously question the contention that with human

progress, people will become mythless. It is as difficult for me to accept this as it is to believe that some day human beings will become "dreamless." In fact, I firmly believe that a recognition of our modern contemporary myths—and this may be difficult if the content of the myth incorporates what we believe to be true and real—and their interpretation in the light of psychoanalytic knowledge, will afford a much better understanding of ourselves as a society and as individuals.

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Some Observations on the Symbolism of The Broken Pot in art and literature

by

P. J. Vinken

I.

An inspection of *The Broken Pitcher*, a painting by the eighteenth century French painter Jean Baptiste Greuze (in the *Louvre*, Paris) may give rise to sexual interpretations. A rather childish girl is standing near a well, apparently on her way to fetch water. With her two hands she presses a bunch of roses to her abdomen, while from her right arm dangles a pitcher with a jagged hole in it. Her cheeks are slightly flushed, and the more lyrical say that "a kiss melts on her cherry-red swelling lips".

Though an effort to establish sexual symbolism may have become fashionable in the post-Freudian world, in this case we can refer to authorities from a time antecedent to Freud. Though Greuze had the reputation of the moralistic painter of his time, and of the hypocrite among his colleagues, his veiled sensual side was not overlooked by critics and biographers. "He was the moralistic painter according to Diderot - writes Jaccottet - but his hidden sensuality remains the best element in his art". Nearly a century ago the Goncourts wrote about the ingenuous Greuze-girl that "at a close view it will seem to you that the painter has placed her in an old era, among the weary appetites of the

eighteenth century, just as a woman's youth is brought to a dotard to rouse him". The German Zolling is even more cutting: "Our proverb of the pitcher that so often goes to the well that it comes home broken at last, is also known in France, but, true Frenchman as he was, the painter preferred the witty variant expressed by the clever Bazile in the *Marriage of Figaro*: 'The pitcher goes to the well until it is . . . filled at last!'. This erotic symbol is veiled in Jean Baptiste Greuze's painting". (1)

However, the suggested symbolic interpretation of the painting is most clearly demonstrated by an anecdote which is said to have inspired the artist and which must have given Zolling his marksmanship. According to this anecdote Greuze's friend Florian told him one day that his servant-girl went to the well every evening. She would then place her pitcher under the water spout, meanwhile slipping off to the park, where a young engraver was at work. While Florian was telling this story they saw the girl go to the well and disappear into the park. When presently the two friends saw her emerge the following dialogue sprang up:

- You see her, she returns pensive and quite surprised.
- Yes. That devil of an engraver must have stolen a few sweet kisses for his dessert.
- So what! They are both young; love at seventeen is a blessing from heaven.
- She has taken up her pitcher again, she walks with a voluptuous indolence. Could I but paint her like that!
- Something would be lacking in that painting.
- What please?
- The kiss received in the park.
- Painting also has its resources; it is not difficult at all to indicate the kiss: the only thing I've got to do is to paint a broken pitcher in Agnes' hand! (2)

The anecdote was probably invented after the picture had been painted. Its value, however, is not to be found in its possible authenticity, but in the specific significance already at that time attached to the painting, a significance of which Greuze himself is the interpreter in the anecdote.

The Broken Pitcher was an enormous success. Paris,

society, *le plus grand monde*, and in its wake the bourgeoisie, flocked to Greuze's studio to admire his work and even a after century it is still called the "unmistakably most popular painting of Paris, which, in the Louvre, can only be approached through a double barrier of spectators". Debu-court (stimulated by his friend's success?) painted his *Village Judge*, which was first exhibited in the Salon of 1781. It represents a sitting of the court; the victim is a young girl, undoubtedly inspired by Greuze's little water-carrier. The accused is a young man and the corpus delicti a broken pitcher. (3)

Judging from the number of engravings after this painting, this version of the broken pitcher must also have scored a considerable success. For on a bet with his friends, von Kleist, inspired by such an engraving (by Leveau), wrote the farce *The Broken Pitcher* (1802); Zschokke wrote a story bearing the same title. Although von Kleist was not familiar with contemporary French painting, and unaware of the anecdote about the broken pitcher (4), the breaking of the pitcher in his comedy is directly connected with a sexual act. In his play the pitcher is broken when a man, who under cover of night, forces his way into a girl's bedroom, is discovered and gets out through the window. In the play the intentions of the intruder are obvious, though the results of his enterprise are not stated explicitly. An action is brought against the offender on the indictment of the breaking of a pitcher, but in the course of the trial the discussions center round the consequences for the girl, rather than the breaking of a pitcher. Very soon the trial assumes the character of a *cour d'amour*, with marriage as the only possible solution.

In its turn the success of von Kleist's play gave rise to a number of French comic operas, the first of which was performed in 1818, the last in 1884. The plots of the libretti deviate considerably from von Kleist's comedy. The opening of one of these musicals states that according to an ancient custom in the country where the scene is laid, all girls of eighteen who for a year have paid a daily visit to the well without breaking their pitchers, may get betrothed. At a

certain moment, however, one of the girls breaks her pitcher, being seduced on her way by a passer-by, *etcetera*. It appears that the developement of the theme since Greuze forms a closed system, for in the first act of the musical comedy the writer gives the stage-manager the following direction for the scenery: *Tableau de Greuze*. (5)

One of these comic operas was undoubtedly the source of a fourth broken pitcher in French art, namely a pastel (*The Broken Jug*) by P. Carrier-Belleuse, at the time a well-known painter of ballet-scenes. In this pastel a stage is to be seen with a fountain in the shape of a St. Bernard's dog, which clearly reminds us of the lion on the fountain in Greuze's painting. In the foreground a male and female dancer in embrace are looking in dismay at the fragments of a pitcher. (6)

The Greuze-painting has made history, perhaps more than any other theme at that time, for it is undoubtedly the theme rather than the particular example that intrigues the spectator.

The breaking of the pitcher in Greuze's painting may be interpreted as a defloration. This symbolism brings to mind the peculiar behaviour of one of Freud's patients, a girl with symptoms of obsession, who, before retiring for the night, placed all the pots and vases in her room in the middle of the table to ensure that they would not fall at night. "Flowerpots and vases - Freud adds - like all vessels, are female symbols. The precaution taken by this patient is not without significance. We know the ubiquitous custom that a betrothal is attended with the smashing of a pot or plate. The measures taken against the breaking of pitchers thus denote a rejection of the entire complex that is closely bound up with virginity and defloration". (7)

The broken pitcher of the Greuze-girl can be seen as a symbol of the perforated hymen. The roses she presses against her genital region accentuate this meaning, and at the same time they suggest its consequence, impregnation. "Flowers - according to Jones - have always been emblematic of women, and particularly of their genital region, as is

indicated by the use of the word defloration, and by various passages in the Song of Solomon; a flower in symbolic language signifies a child" (8). The spouting lion's head in the background manifestly emphasizes the role of the male in the event. In the painting the well as a whole (but particularly the *receptaculum*) symbolizes the female genital. That this symbolical meaning of well or fountain or spring must have been current knowledge in all times appears from many passages in the Bible, e.g. from the *Song of Solomon* (4, 12):

My own, my bride, a garden enclosed
A spring of water sealed secure . . .

or from *Leviticus* 12, 18):

If a man lies with a woman during her monthly period
and has intercourse with her, he has bared her fountain, . . .

In Debucourt's painting we see a sitting of the court, where a furious mother accuses a young man, while her daughter has the timid manner of the victim who has just given evidence. The corpus delicti, a broken pitcher, is held up by her father by way of demonstration. In von Kleist's play the pitcher breaks in the course of a rape and in the French musical comedy a girl on her way to the well breaks her pitcher while being seduced.

The pitcher of the "Greuze-theme" (the girl breaking an empty pitcher on her way to the well) is no new motif in literature. It is true that it is not always possible to trace its historical continuity as a literary historian or an iconologist might wish. But to the psychological enquirer the continuous genealogy of a theme is not such an absolute necessity. For our purpose the constant symbolical significance of a theme is a more important indication.

The Greeks already had a myth in which a woman with a pitcher goes to a well to fetch water. Also this woman is raped and in the process she also drops her pitcher. It is the myth of the naiad Amymone.

One of the versions of this myth relates that Amymone,

sent by her father to the well to fetch water, is overmastered by Poseidon when on her way. "The sight of Amymone", says Philostratus, "as she visits the waters of Inachus, has overmastered the god (Poseidon) and he sets out to pursue the girl, who does not yet know that she is loved. At any rate the fright of the maiden, her trembling, and the golden pitcher falling from her hands make it evident that Amymone is astounded and at a loss to know with what purpose Poseidon so precipitately leaves the sea, and her natural pallor is illuminated by the gold of the pitcher, as its brightness is reflected in the water. Let us withdraw, and leave the maiden, for already a wave is arching over for the nuptials, and though the water is still bright and pellucid in appearance, Poseidon will presently paint it a purple hue". (9)

This myth contains virtually all the details of the Greuze theme. In this story the well forms an integral part, and, as with Greuze, it is frequently depicted by the Greeks in the shape of a lion's head. Although in the Greek story the pitcher never breaks, which is well-nigh impossible, because some texts state that Amymone's pitcher is a golden one, the pitcher does drop on the ground and in a number of cases this fall is depicted. Finally the Amymone myth is in complete harmony with the symbolism of Greuze's painting. The "purple hue" of the water, after Poseidon's disappearance with Amymone into the depth, leaves no doubt about it.

The *breaking* of the pitcher in Greuze's representation may be ascribed to the influence of another famous tradition of broken pitchers, namely that of the *Pancatantra*-theme, to which we shall presently direct our attention. For the sake of convenience and distinction between the Amymone-Greuze theme and this *Pancatantra* tradition we shall call the development outlined above (from Greuze *via* Debucourt to von Kleist, and its ramifications) the *Greuze tradition*.

The water-carrying virgin was as popular in antiquity as it was since the eighteenth century. After Homer, the myth is mentioned or elaborately treated by Aeschylus, Hyginus, Apollodorus and Oppian. Lucian narrates the story in one of

his dialogues which were to become so popular afterwards, and in the *Anthologia Palatina* we find the following, significant epigram:

There sat rosy-fingered Amymone; she was gathering up her unfileted hair behind, while her face was unveiled, and with upturned glance she was gazing at her black-haired lord the sea-king. For near her stood Poseidon, naked, with flowing hair, holding out to her a dripping dolphin, bringing a suitor's gift for the hand of the much-sought maiden. (10)

The Amymone incident does not only occur in literature, but also on numerous Greek urns, coins and gems. On one of these urns Amymone and Poseidon celebrate their wedding; from above Aphrodite watches the couple. At the bottom of the urn a satyr significantly fills Amymone's pitcher from the lion-shaped well. (11)

But also in the late Middle-Ages, when woman began to play an important part in national literature, when the Virgin became one of the feminine standard-types, we meet the defloration symbolism of the broken pitcher. This age with its heightened appreciation of virginity and chastity, this age of the "Nun, the Witch and the Lady", with its chivalry, Provençal poetry, its Courts of Love and its Codes of Love, but also with its bigotry and hypocrisy, must have embraced this metaphor. (12) The *Ancren Rewle*, a kind of medieval nun's catechism, warns its female readers as follows:

. . . she who bears a precious liquor or a precious drink, such as balsam, in a frail vessel,—would not she go out of the way of a crowd, unless she were a fool? This brittle vessel is woman's flesh. Of this brittle vessel the Apostle saith: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels". The balsam is virginity, which is therein, or after the loss of maiden honour, chaste purity. This brittle vessel is more brittle than any glass, for, be it once broken, it is never mended. . . But with regard to the loss of virginity, its purity may be lost by an unchaste wish . . . (13)

In Dutch medieval literature we find a poem (in the sixteenth century *Antwerps Liedboek*) in which young lovers

are mocked who in springtime seduce a girl, and consequently marry "a little broken pot":

. . . Dan trouwen si een motteken
Oft een ghebroken pottteken
Si torten so lief int rotteken
Men vint so menich sotteken . . . (14)

In emblematic literature we encounter a specimen of the broken pitcher (probably of French origin) in the emblems of the widely read seventeenth century Dutch moralist Jacob Cats. The engraving depicts a girl with a broken pot at a well, a dog sitting beside her. The accompanying poem relates a story which in outline is the same as that of the French comic opera two centuries later. The poet leaves no doubt as to the sexual significance of his moralistic digression. With the explicitness of his time he summarizes this emblem with the motto: "A virgin, dishonoured because of her frivolity." (15)

The famous painter Jordaens, Cats' contemporary, illustrated a number of proverbs. One of these representations seems to anticipate the future paintings by Greuze and Debucourt. It is the illustration of the proverb: The pitcher goes so often to the well that it comes home broken at last. It shows a girl with a broken pitcher at a well. A dog, (a contemporary edition of the Greek satyr?) sits beside her. Opposite are the parents, scolding her. (16)

The broken pitcher must have had a familiar sexual significance through the ages. But in Greuze's age, with its great antiquarian interest in the art of the Ancients, also the myth of Amymone must have been well-known. Though the *Imagines* by Philostratus were not reprinted in the eighteenth century, there was a revival of the interest in the *Greek Anthology* in the latter half of that century. The *Iconology* by Gravelot and Cochin contains a naiad with urn and trident. Encyclopedias of that time make mention of the myth, but for us the popularity of the works of Lucian is a guarantee that the Amymone story was common knowledge. For centuries, as a matter of fact, Poseidon and Amymone had

been familiar ornaments on fountains and near ponds, and as for the painters, we are sure that at least three of Boucher's works (among which a painting and a design for a gobelin) have this myth for their subject.

II.

In La Fontaine's famous fable, *Perette and the milkpot*, the peasant woman Perette is on her way to the market to sell a pitcher of milk, and she indulges in fancies about the possibilities of the proceeds. For the money she will buy eggs and will have them hatched to exchange the resulting fowls for a hog. The hog will be fattened and sold and its proceeds will enable her to purchase a cow and a calf. Her imagination is so lively that she pictures the animals frisking in her herd and that picture makes her so gay that she starts skipping; her pitcher drops to the ground and breaks, its contents running in a pool on the road. (17)

The subject of this fable is no more original than most of the other themes in La Fontaine. We first come across it in the *Pancatantra*, a book of fables in Sanskrit compiled about 500 A.D. . Though the corresponding story in this book differs from the La Fontaine version, the affinity between the two fables is clearly recognizable. The early version is a frame-story, a story within a story. A woman who has long been barren is pregnant at last. When her husband in his imagination is speculating about the pleasures that they will both find in their son, she warns him not to build castles in the air and she relates the following fable:

In a town lived a Brahmin named Svabhavaripana. His pot was filled with the leavings of his dinner of rice. He hung it on a pin in the wall, pushed his bed under it and kept looking at it. One night when he was in his bed he thought: What a potful of rice! In times of famine I shall get a hundred rupaka's for that rice. For the money I shall buy two goats who will beget young every six months, so that a herd will be formed. For the goats I shall buy many cows, for them I shall buy buffaloes and for them I shall buy mares. These mares will frequently foal and by selling those horses I shall earn much gold. For the gold I shall have a big house

built with a garden in the center and rooms on four sides. A Brahmin will come to me and give me his beautiful daughter and a dowry. She will give me a son and I shall call him Somasarman. As soon as he will have reached the age when I can rock him on my knees I shall be sitting with a book at the back of the stable. Somasarman will see me and immediately leave his mother's lap in his eagerness to be rocked and swung, but he will get too close to the horse's hoofs. I shall get angry and tell the Bramanin: Mind the child! Intent on her household duties as she is, she will not hear me and I shall get up and kick her.

Engrossed in his phantasies he kicked out, so that his pot broke and he was "stained white by rice". (18)

The *Pancatantra* spread from India to Arabia, was translated from Arabic into Persian (1150 A.D.) and fables of the collection have been known in Europe since about the eleventh century. The book became one of the most widely-read works of world literature, so that it is not surprising that this fable of the broken pitcher was known in all layers of the West-European population for centuries: it is found in medieval sermons, in the *Arabian Nights*, in the *facetiae* of the renaissance, in plays, in popular sayings (*vide* Rabelais, *Garg.* 33) and in the literature from the court of Margareth of Navarre. La Fontaine's fable is the last well-known link in the *Pancatantra* tradition, and it has found a great number of illustrators, engravers and painters. Thus it is clear that the tradition of the broken pitcher is a venerable one, not only in literature but also in art. What should be more obvious than to see in Greuze's painting a rather free interpretation, infusing new life into the old theme, enabling it to start on a new round of triumphs?

However, a few details in the painting make it unlikely that the Greuze-tradition is a simple continuation of the *Pancatantra* story. Greuze's girl obviously intended to go to the well to fetch water, when her pitcher broke. Consequently the pitcher was empty, whereas in each of the hundreds of variants of the *Pancatantra* theme the pitcher is always filled, with rice or honey, butter, oil and later in most cases with milk. (19) The filled pot is an essential requirement for

the point of the fable, and in its many representations in art, the contents of the pitcher are invariably seen forming a pool on the ground, as e.g. in a painting by Fragonard. (20) In no version of the Pancatantra story is there any mention of a well, whereas in the Greuze-tradition the well is an indispensable part of the intrigue. From the socio-historical point of view there is no important connection between the Aymone-Greuze tradition and the Pancatantra-La Fontaine tradition. The heterogeneity of the two themes is also demonstrated in their symbolical content.

Anybody reading the Indian fable, will understand its moral, *viz.* that a man who rejoices at an imaginary golden future is frequently disabused. But a psychoanalyst reading the fable may also think of an orgasmic phantasy. He will point to the rhythm of the ever widening daydream, the succession of animals (passions, sexual urges), the son (little boy) growing big enough (erection) to be rocked (excited, stimulated), the monk hitting his wife, the kicking of the horse and the breaking of the pot. The interpretation of the saved-up rice as semen, which, when the pot breaks, is poured out over the monk (in another version explicitly over his beard and bedclothes) is a commonplace to a psychoanalyst, who will point out that, as in so many dreams, the monk's dream also contains an inversion: his phantasy replaces *introitus vaginae* by the son leaving his mother's lap to run to him.

But this interpretation, irrefutable as it may be from a technical point of view, can add but little to our understanding of the fable. Such an interpretation is comparable with explaining a dream, taking no account at all of the dreamer's personality. Neither valuable data from the context in which the fable appears, nor the results provided by the study of its further development are considered.

In the frame-story of the Pancatantra, in which our fable functions as a parable told by the pregnant woman to her husband when he anticipates the birth of his child, we are told that shortly afterwards a son was born to them. In this context, of course, the fable assumes a quite different

significance. The pregnant woman employed it as a warning to her husband that the confinement, anticipated by him so impatiently, might not take place at all. In other words, the fable illustrates exactly the opposite of what happens in the frame-story. Therefore we should regard the breaking of the pitcher as a symbol of menstruation or abortion. The pot in which the monk had saved his rice breaks by accident, before its time. Apart from this, the fable seems to allude to the aggression and the jealousy of the future father towards his pregnant wife, known to us from Reik's description. (21)

We shall look into the historical evolution of the fable, and doing so, we shall come across various mutations which are immaterial to the manifest purport of the fable, but which will appear to be of great importance to a psychoanalytical investigation.

In its development the contents of the pitcher change. We saw that the pot in the Pancatantra fable contained rice. In later versions we meet among other things honey, oil, butter and milk; materials which already in ancient India were associated explicitly with sexuality and fertility, and even at present repeatedly occur as symbols for semen in dreams of patients. (22)

In the thirteenth century the fable makes its first appearance in the "European version" in a sermon by Jacques Vitry, and not much later in Nicolas Pergamenus. A woman goes to the market with a pitcher of milk. On her way she has phantasies concerning the possibilities of its proceeds, followed by much the same daydream as the monk's in the Indian fable. "While she was thinking of these things", Vitry says, "she began to move her feet and heels as if she had spurs on them, clapped her hands for joy, so that by the motion of her feet and the clapping of her hands she broke the pitcher and the milk was spilled on the ground". The girl's detailed (as it were orgasmic) movements of hands and feet form one of the European additions. In Pergamenus we witness an almost exact reversal of the initial Indian version. While in the Indian fable the monk's marriage was the apex of his daydream, in Pergamenus the girl's phantasy

also ends in a wedding and she looks forward to be taken to church, on horseback, by her husband: "She cried Come on! Come on!, meanwhile stamping the ground with her foot, thinking she spurred her horse, but she slipped and fell into the ditch, and all her milk was spilled on the ground." (23)

Another variant is the story by Pauly, featuring a young farmer's wife going to the market to sell her milk and eggs. With the proceeds of the milk she is going to buy a new pair of shoes. When she arrives in the market-place it is too early and she sits down against a wall and falls asleep. She dreams that she is already at the shoemakers' who is fitting on a shoe. She stretches out her leg, overturns her pot of milk and wakes up with a start. When she gets up she is still so drowsy with sleep that she also drops her basket of eggs. In Hans Sachs (1559), who borrowed this fable from Pauly, a farmer's girl with her eggs climbs a flight of stairs and when she has reached its top, still overcome with sleep, she makes a false step and rolls down the stairs with her eggs. (24)

We see that the main character of the Indian fable has undergone a sex-inversion in the European versions. In fact the whole of the oriental fertility-intrigue centering around the monk and his family (in the East one's offspring used to be mainly the man's concern) turned into a women's affair in Europe.

But also the other element in the Pancatantra fable, the orgastic symbolism, comes to the fore in the medieval European versions. The girl in Vitry's sermon makes movements which point to sexual excitation before her pitcher breaks. In Pergamenus the woman dreams that she goes with her husband, on horseback, to the church, and breaks her pitcher. Pauly's girl breaks her pot when fitting a shoe and in Sachs' story the eggs are broken when the girl climbs a flight of stairs. The symbolical significance of this ever more conspicuous element is obvious. As was the case in the *Ancren Rewle* these medieval texts seem to warn girls in veiled terms not to throw away their virginity, which they

will undoubtedly do if they indulge in sexual phantasies. (25) But when we consider the Pancatantra theme in its historical pattern it seems probable that its unconscious appeal is even more applicable to pregnant women. In the course of its evolution the Pancatantra fable appears to warn in an ever more transparent way against the well-known dangers of sexual intercourse for a pregnant woman, namely abortion.

This connection between pot and pregnant uterus appears even more strikingly in another popular work of those times. The thirteenth century *Gesta Romanorum* contains a story, *De Dominica Incarnacione*, in which a wise king is told by his friends that the time has come for him to get himself a wife and beget children. The king orders to search far and wide for a suitable bride and when at length they send him a young maiden he expresses his willingness to marry her if she succeeds in making him an under-shirt out of a tiny piece of cloth he gives her. In her turn she asks him for a pot in which to make the shirt and indeed, when the king gives her a pot she manages to make a well-fitting shirt for him *in the pot* ("illa vero de tam parva quantitate in eodem vase operata est camisiā sufficientem pro corpore suo"). In the epimythion the medieval narrator applies the story allegorically to the mystery of Christ's birth: the king, he says, is God, the girl is Mary, and the pot is called by him *Uterum suum sanctificatum*. The garment made in the pot is called *humanitas*. To the twentieth century reader the psychoanalytical symbolism of the story is obvious: the future bride's fertility must first be put to the test. Not before she had proved she could make a normal shirt out of an insignificant piece of cloth, in the pot, was the king satisfied. (26) The symbolical association of pot and uterus was, for that matter, already known in Greek mythology, where a flagon was said to have given birth to Bacchus by spilling its wine. (27)

The *breaking* of a filled pot can, apart from abortion, also signify confinement, as appears from a play by Gil Vicente, the sixteenth century founder of Portuguese drama. The play, the *Auto da Mofina Mendes*, which was played all

over Europe at the time, consists of two parts. In the first, after the play has been introduced by a monk's long and pedantic sermon in verse, the angel Gabriel announces the Saviour's birth to the Virgin. Shepherds appear on the stage. One of them dismisses a servant-girl whom he is dissatisfied with. He presents her with a pot of oil as a parting gift. The girl, now alone on the stage, proposes to sell the oil at the fair, to buy eggs and sell the ducks, and marry and dance and sings. She dances and sings, the pot of oil falls and breaks, and she disappears from the stage. In the second part the Virgin and the Virtues re-enter, and the angel announces the birth to the sleeping shepherds. (28) Thus at the point of the drama where Christ's nativity will take place, the story of Bethlehem is interrupted for an intermezzo: the girl appears on the stage and breaks her pot. The play then goes on and the public is informed that in the meantime the birth has taken place. The entr'acte in which the girl breaks a filled pot, replaces the birth that could not be performed otherwise. The modern spectator should not be able to make head or tail of this entr'acte. The fact that it occurs, without any further explanation, in a sixteenth century play, and fulfills an intelligible function in it, proves that Vicente's contemporaries were quite familiar with the symbolism of the breaking pitcher.

Of the painters who were inspired by the Pancatantra fable, Fragonard is the best-known. His painting (*Perette and the milkpot*) is a representation of the fable by La Fontaine, or a predecessor (probably Bonaventura des Perriers). The milkmaid measures her length on the ground, her uncovered legs are frivolously up in the air. On the ground before her lies the broken pot, the milk streaming from it, but at the same time an enormous column of smoke emerges from its opening. Smoke, like the contents of the pot in the other Pancatantra versions, is a symbol of fertility, frequently met with in post-renaissance art. (29)

Finally, the case of one of Hadfield's patients furnishes an interesting instance of the present symbolism in practice. In one of her dreams she had "a goblet like a communion-

cup which was old and made of wood. Then it began to crack, and when it cracked and powdered into dust, it turned into gold. As she proceeded in free association, she saw ' . . . my golden cup and my father puts his nose into it to see the contents, which he regards with some contempt, he is always poking his nose into things . . . ' etc." Although Hadfield directed his patient's attention to the obvious sexual symbolism of her dream, she denied that she was emotionally affected by a Freudian interpretation of it. And she insisted that the goblet in her dream represented her personality, which "contains something, namely herself. This had been broken by her father's treatment of her, but the dream reassures her that she will develop a richer, more valuable (golden) personality". In the light of the symbolism of the broken pitcher, as described in the present study, it is clear, however, that this dream concerns a.o. the emotional complex which is bound up with the menarche, which marks the beginning of potential fertility, and which was rejected by the patient on a conscious level. (30).

Summarizing our conclusions at this point, we may say that the breaking of a pitcher may represent defloration, as was the case in the myth of Amymone, in the medieval and renaissance texts, and later in the evolution of the *Greuze* theme. The defloration symbolism often occurred in a complex of stereotype symbols: fetching water, a well, a fountain, a lion or a dog.

Besides, the breaking of a pot may represent menstruation, abortion or confinement, as in the *Pancatantra* story. During its evolution also this theme was characterized by a constant combination of components: breaking a pot filled with foodstuffs in the course of an expansive series of phantasies. In some instances (e.g. the medieval texts) the abortion symbolism of the story seems to be intertwined with the coital or defloration symbolism we remember from the *Amymone* tradition.

Both these functions, the defloration as well as the fertility aspect, stand out plainly in the printer's mark of the sixteenth century Paris printer Geofroy Tory, in which the

symbolism of the broken pitcher is pushed - as it were - to its final conclusion. The mark represents a pitcher with a hole in it. A long-shaped twisting machine (a windlass) is stuck through the hole, and from the pitcher's neck emerges a bunch of flowers. In his mark Tory bore both impregnation and fertility, a most appropriate device for a printer-editor. (31)

Thus the pot may function as a female (uterus) symbol. We shall see that the broken pitcher also appears as a symbol of the opposites, as a male symbol, and as a symbol of decay, of impotence or of castration.

III.

The satyr we encountered on the Greek urn, where he fills the pitcher lost by Amydone at the well, while she is having her wedding with Poseidon—, that satyr is only a minor detail in the scene. Not a single Greek text mentions his picking up Amydone's pitcher, and so we must look upon him as just a decorative supernumerary, another symbol of what takes place between the protagonists on the stage. But even walking-gentlemen have been known to be cast for leading parts, if only they have patience enough or have the luck to be discovered. Also the satyr's own pitcher may be broken, even after tens of centuries!

Salomon Gessner, eighteenth century writer and engraver, published an idyll in a style closely resembling that of Theocritus and Virgil, entitled *The Broken Pitcher*, featuring a satyr. The satyr has his siesta under an oak. A number of herdmen, male and female, find him and resolve to play a trick upon him. They tie his hands and feet to the tree and smash his pitcher which lies beside him on the grass. The smash awakes the satyr and he is roused into a lament that covers several pages. (32)

Gessner himself illustrated this story, in which we see the amalgamation of two motifs, viz. "Pan bound" (we may identify satyr or faun with Pan, or with Silenus) with the motif of the broken pot. Pan bound is a well-known phenomenon in mythology and in post-classical art. In a fight Pan

is defeated and led off bound by Eros. Gessner's immediate source for the story was undoubtedly an *Eclogue* (VI) of Virgil, in which the sleeping Silenus is bound by naiads.

The second motif in Gessner's story, Pan or a satyr whose pitcher is broken, is unknown with the Ancients, and no example is known before Gessner. However, when we read Pan's mythography we are struck (sensible as we have become to the sexual significance of the broken pot) by one of the other roles of this versatile figure, *viz.* that of inventor of onanism. "During that languid afternoon's rest", Roscher says, "young, strong natures, as lonely herdsmen and hunters mostly are, are easily beset by feelings of lust (cf. Catullus 32,3.61,114.Ovid.*Am.*1,5.1,26) followed by the urge to gratify them in a natural or unnatural way. Thus the sexual inversion of onanism is explicitly accounted for as a custom among shepherds during their languid and lonely afternoon's rest and its invention is retraced to the prototype of the shepherd, the rural god Pan (cf. Dio Chrys.or.6,Theocr.1,86.*etc.*)"(33).

Gessner's satyr was set upon when sleeping, his pitcher was broken and he woke up powerless, *impotent*: the immediate result of, for example, masturbation, but also of castration. And that a castration symbolism associated with Pan was known also with the Ancients becomes clear if we take his defeat against Eros metaphorically, but also from a quotation from Philostratus: "... when he (Pan), however, pays no heed to them, they set upon him at noon, when Pan is said to abandon the hunt and go to sleep. Formerly he used to sleep relaxed, with peaceful nostrils and soothing his angry spirit with slumber, but today he is very angry; for the nymphs have fallen upon him, and already Pan's hands have been tied behind his back, and he fears for his legs, since the nymphs wish to seize them. Moreover his beard, which he values most highly, has been shaven off with razors which have been roughly applied to it. . ." (34)

That the shaving of hair (beard) is a castration symbol, is too universally known to necessitate quotations here. The passage from Philostratus given here, closely resembles the

events in Gessner's story, the only difference being that the shaving of Pan's beard in the classical story, is replaced in Gessner's *Idyll* by the breaking of his pitcher.

The breaking of a pot as a symbol for masturbation is even more obvious in a *Capricho* by Goya, where a youngster is spanked by his enraged mother, while she holds up his clothes with her teeth. The reason for this punishment is indicated by a big pitcher in fragments lying in the foreground. At the foot of the engraving we read *Si quebro el cantaro*. (35) The following comment by Hadfield, though made in a different context, seems relevant to this grim scene: "The angry mother whom the child defied during the day becomes a terrifying ogre or revenging witch at night, who reduces the child to abject submission: the orgasm or temper it cannot control appears as a huge monstrous or suffocating creature". Like the pot in Tory's printer's mark the broken pitcher in this engraving plays a double symbolic role, for besides masturbation it also symbolizes here the mother punishing with castration.

The plaintive, melancholy tone of Gessner's story is also apparent in a later example, a poem by Sully Prudhomme, *The Broken Vase*: (36)

- (1) Le vase ou meurt cette verveine
D'un coup d'éventail fut fêlé.
Le coup dut effleurer à peine,
Aucun bruit me l'a révélé.
- (3) Son eau fraîche a fui goutte à goutte
Le suc des fleurs s'est épuisé;
Personne encore ne s'en doute;
N'y touchez pas, il est brisé.
- (4) Souvent aussi la main qu'on aime
Effleurant le cœur, le meurtrit;
Puis le cœur se fend de lui même,
La fleur de son amour pêrit

and in a poem of his contemporary, the nineteenth century Austrian poet Daniel Spitzer: *The Broken Pitcher*, of which a few stanzas are given here:

- (1) Da liegt er denn von mir zerschlagen
 Ich war's der ihn zerschlug!
 Ein wackrer Freund seit frühen Tagen
 Mein guter, alter Krug!
- (3) Wie oft sass ich in meiner Kammer
 Wenn's Mitternacht schon schlug,
 Erzählend Dir doch meinen Jammer
 Du guter, alter Krug!
- (5) So mancher Freund hat mich verlassen,
 Ich zähle ihrer g'nug!
 Dich aber könnt' ich stets umfassen,
 Du guter, alter Krug! (37)

Although these poems contain adequate symbolism to warrant a conclusive sexual interpretation, the pitcher could here be considered in a more general symbolical sense, as in the case of Hadfield's patient, closer to the archetype of the pot, as described by Jung. (38)

The note of depression apparent in all the instances in which the broken pot functions as a symbol of male decay contrasts sharply with most of the variants of the Pancatantra and Greuze traditions. The entr'acte with the birth-symbolism in Vicente's play, for instance, is written in a frankly gay key, and also the versions of the Pancatantra theme which allude to abortion do not breathe such a melancholy spirit as the stories in which a male plays the leading part. Of Amymone's defloration even high-toned lyrical descriptions are found. (39)

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NOTES

1. Ph. Jaccottet, *Le Dessin Français au XVIIIe Siècle*, Lausanne 1952 (introduction); P. et J. de Goncourt, *L'Art du XVIIIe siècle*, Paris 1873, 438, (chapter on Greuze); Th. Zolling, *Heinrich von Kleist in der Schweiz*, Stuttgart 1882.
2. A. Houssaye, *Galerie du XVIIIe siècle*, Paris 1858, K. Siegen, *Heinrich von Kleist und der zerbrochene Krug*, Berlin 1879, note 1.
3. Reproduction in *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, Paris, March 1872.
4. This appears clearly from the following fragment from von Kleist's diary: "Diesem Lustspiel liegt wahrscheinlich ein historisches Faktum, worüber ich jedoch kein nähere Auskunft habe auffinden können, zu Grunde. Ich nahm die Veranlassung dazu aus einem Kupferstich den ich vor mehreren Jahren in der Schweiz sah (. . .) Darunter stand: Der Zerbrochene Krug,— das Original war, wenn ich nicht irre, von einem niederländischen Meister". That the etching must have been Leveau's, was conclusively demonstrated by Zolling (o.c. 1882). Cf. also Zolling, *Heinrich von Kleist's Sämtliche Werke*, vol. ii, introduction.
5. *La Cruche Cassée*, opéra comique en trois actes par Jules Moineaux et Jules Nauriac, first performance Paris Oct. 27 1875 in the Théâtre Taitbout, (quoted by Siegen, o.c.). Further: *La Cruche*, opéra comique en un acte, musique d'Alphonse Pellet, performed Nîmes, May 12th 1884, and *La Cruche Cassée*, opéra comique en un acte et en vers, by H. Lucas and E. Abraham, performed Paris 1870, and *La Cruche Cassée ou Les Riveaux de Village*, opéra comique en deux actes, by L. de Corvey, Paris, Dec. 24th, 1818.
6. Exhibited at the Salon of 1901. Reproduction in the *Catalogue Illustré de la Société Nationale des Beaux Arts*, Paris 1901.
7. S. Freud, *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*, XVII.
8. E. Jones, *Essays*, London 1951; W. Stekel, *Die Sprache des Traumes*, 1922, 196. Cf. also Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Bk. V (*Rape of Proserpine*)
9. Philostratus, *Imagines* I, 8, edition by A. Fairbanks, in the Loeb Classical Library, 256. Cf. also *Eccles.* 12, 7; Theocritus, *Idyll* XIII. In a footnote to his Philostratus translation Fairbanks accounts for the 'purple hue' as: *enriching the marriage chamber, and concealing the pair*. But the psychoanalytical symbolism is obvious.
10. *The Greek Anthology*, Loeb Class. Libr., Bk. II. Also: Hygin, *Astron.* 17. For Greek representations of this text see J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, Leipzig 1873 Atlas, Tafel XIII, and Vol. II, *Poseidon and Anymone*, 368 *passim*.
11. J. D. Beazley, *Etruscan Vase Painting*, Oxford 1947, Pl. 19, fig. 1. The same lion shaped well appears next to the Tree Of Knowl-

- edge on a woodcut in a medieval work: Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum* (Neurenberg 1493), which illustrates the fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise. See also *Genesis* 24, in which the well plays an important part in the selection of Isaac's bride Rebecca, and *Exodus* (2:16-20) where Moses meets his future wife Zippora for the first time at a well. The well in the story of *Pyramus and Thisbe* has certainly an analogous meaning. It plays also an indispensable symbolical role in the numerous galant garden scenes in e.g. French eighteenth century painting. On a representation by Wilhelm von Kaulbach (reproduced in E. Fuch, *Geschichte der Erotischen Kunst*, Muenchen) entitled "Wer kauft Liebesgötter", appears a phallus-shaped well, from which the waterjet spouts into a pot.
12. J. Langdon Davies, *A Short History of Women*, London 1948.
 13. *The Nun's Rule, being the Ancren Rewle, modernized by James Morton etc.*, The Medieval Library, London 1926. Cf. *Hamlet*, Act I, Scene 2: *Frailty, they name is woman!*
 14. *Een Schoon Liedekensboek*, Antwerp 1554, ed. W. Gs. Hellinga, The Hague 1941, LIV, 5. Also a poem by the 16th Century Netherlands' poet Jan van Styevoort in: F. Lyna and W. van Eeghem, *Jan van Styevoorts Refereinen-bundel Anno 1524*, Antwerp 1929, Vol. II, CXC. The notorious eighteenth century English Dora Jordan, mistress of the Duke of Clarence, was nicknamed *The Cracked Jordan*. She appears in a caricature of the time as a big cracked pot, while the Duke is engaged in climbing through one of its holes (cf. E. Fuchs, *o.c.* Vol. I).
 15. Jacob Cats, *Spiegel van den Ouden en den Nieuwen Tijd*, The Hague 1632, XLVII. Also the same work, XL: a virgin with a bottle and the device *Il ne faut qu'un faux pas pour casser la bouteille*. In a similar engraving by D. Cole, after Boitard, the pot in the girl's hand has been broken. The caption reads *Beware!*, and under the print is: *Love's bitter potion, or Dolly pregnant*. (Repr. in: E. Fuchs, *Illustrierte Sittengeschichte vom Mittelalter bis zum Gegenwart*, München 1909-1912, vol. II).
 16. Reproduction in M. Rooses, *Jordaens, Leven en Werken*, Amsterdam-Antwerp 1906, 93.
 17. J. de la Fontaine, *Fables*, Garnier edition by E. Pilon and F. Dauphin, Paris VII, 10. Dracoulides (*Psychanalyse de l'artiste et de son oeuvre*, Geneve 1952) says that La Fontaine conceived the fable *Deux Pigeons* in a dream. This is incorrect; the theme can already be met with in Ancient India, and a.o. in Horace (*Ep.* I, x, 3-6) and in Fenelon, *Fables* xx.
 18. Th. Benfey, *Pantschatantra*, Leipzig 1859
 19. J. Hertel, *Das Pancatantra, seine geschichte und seine Verbreitung*, Leipzig-Berlin 1914. There is no complete literature on this fable and its variants. Nearest to it come Oesterley, in his edition of

- H. W. Kirchhof's *Wendunmuth*, Tübingen 1869, and J. Bolte, in his edition of Montanus' *Schwankbücher* (1557-1566), Tübingen 1899.
20. In the Cognac-Jay Museum, Paris. Cf. also Gonceourt, *o.e.*, chapter on Fragonard.
 21. Th. Reik, *Das Ritual*, 1928, and in *Imago* III, 1919, quoted by A. J. Westerman Holstein, *Inleiding tot de ontwikkelingspsychologie*, Utrecht 1949, 80-83.
 22. J. Jolly in Bühler-Kielhorn, *Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde*, 1901, III, 10: "... zeugungskräftiger Samen ist ... nach Geruch und Farbe dem Honig gleichend, oder von gleicher Farbe wie Butter und Oel. . . (p. 50); and "Wie in der Milch die Butter ... enthalten ist, so der Samen in dem Samenhaltigen Substrat" (p. 49); and: "... eine Schwangere gleicht einem vollen Oelgefäß, das man nicht ins Schwanken bringen darf. . . " Cf. also pp. 52, 53, 62, 63. Burzoe, the physician who translated the *Pancatantra* into Persian about 550 A.D., relates the following detail in his introduction: "... when the fluid that will give birth to the child comes into the uterus of a woman it mixes with her fluid and her blood, coagulates and becomes pulpy. Then the wind shakes this fluid, which comes to look like buttermilk, and after that like curdled milk. . . etc.". *Vide*: Hertel (*o.e.* 368); also: W. Stekel, *Die Sprache des Traumes*, München 1922, 172, 198, 219; N. da. Silveira Rudolfer, *Un caso de anorexia nerviosa*, *Rev. Psicoanal.* 1957, 13, 4, 419-497.
 23. Jac. Vitry, *Exempla*, ed. T. F. Crane, London 1890, 1280-1240. Pergamenus' version in H. Regnier, *Oeuvres de La Fontaine*, Vol. II, translated by Perot from the *Dialogus Creaturarum Moralisatus*.
 24. Johannes Pauly, *Schimpf und Ernst*, 1522, LXXIV, ed. J. Bolte, Berlin 1924, 520. Hans Sachs, *Sämtliche Fabeln und Schwänke*, ed. E. Goetze, Halle 1894, Vol. II, *Die Pawren Gred mit den Antlas Ayern*, 1559. I do not go further into what might be called a "daughter-theme" of that of the broken pot, *viz.* that of the *broken eggs*. In medieval literature it becomes a popular variant of the *Pancatantra* fable about the pot, and it has quite a history of its own in the following ages. Literature on the "egg-variant" in Joh. Bolte's edition of Montanus' *Schwankbücher*, Tübingen 1899 (*Gartengesellschaften*, cap. 53). In the eighteenth century this theme was taken as a subject in a painting by (again!) Greuze and an engraving by Leprince. Cf. John Smith, *Catalogue Raisonné etc.*, Vol. VIII, London 1829-1842; Jules Hédon, *Jean Leprince et son oeuvre*, Paris 1879, 166, 156.
 25. See also Theocritus, *Idylls*, XXVII.
 26. Quoted by Jan de Vries, *Die Märchen von klugen Rätsellösern*,

F.F. Communications, 72, Helsinki 1928. Cf. also Jan de Vries, F.F. communications 73, 237 (*Pot has a child and dies*) An early specimen of the association of woman and pitcher will be found in medieval Chinese literature, in a poem by the ninth century poet Yüan Chên, *The Pitcher* (in A. Waley, *The Life and Times of Po Chü-I*, London 1949, and *Chinese Poems*, London 1948) The deceased wife of the poet appears in his dream as a pitcher in a well.

In ancient India the pitcher played an interesting part in popular belief. A full, water-filled pitcher was said to bring good luck, an empty one ill luck. Even today encountering a woman with a full pitcher is considered a good omen in India, whereas meeting a woman with an empty waterpitcher is held to be unpropitious. (Cf. Zachariae, *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, 1905)

I shall not go into another fable originating in India (Panc. III, 13-14) called *The Two Pots*. Finding its way down oriental channels into antique fable-lore (Avianus 11; Babrius 184), this fable was incorporated in the famous collection known as Aesop's fables (422): A copper pot and an earthen pot meet in a river. The earthen pot being lighter than its copper fellow, the latter proposed to the earthen pot to go on in each other's company. The earthen pot declined the invitation: *I wylle not go with the/ For it should happe to me as it happed to the glas and of the mortar / For yf thou sholdest mete with me / Thou sholdest breke and putte me in to pyeces*. In the course of its literary development the moral of the fable keeps its social purport: *The poure ought not to take the Ryche as his felawe* . . . In this form the fable soon found its way into emblematics (Alciati, 166). Cf. J. Jacobs, *The fables of Aesop, as first printed by William Caxton in 1484*, London 1889. The only place where, to our knowledge, the fragility of the earthen pot in this fable is explicitly associated with eroticism is in the emblems by Roemer Visscher, (*Sinnepoppen*, The Hague 1949, re-edition of the 1614 Amsterdam-edition), where its purport is given as . . . *dat een dochter van kleyn vermoghen haer ontsie met jonghmans van heel hooger state, geslacht en rijckdom te converseren*. For the sexual symbolism of the pot in Ancient Greece and Egypt see: A. A. Barb, *Diva Matrix*, Journ. Warburg and Courtauld Inst. vol. XVI, 1953, 200-201. See also: D-E. Panofsky: *Pandora's Box*, London 1956, 112-113.

27. Cf. the epigram of Phillipus of Thessalonica in the *Greek Anthology*, Loeb Class. Libr. Book IX, 232, note.
28. A. F. G. Bell, *Gil Vicente*, Oxford Univ. Press 1921. Cf. also Axon, Trans. Royal Soc. Lit. Vol. XXIII, IV, 1902. In a *Paso* of the 16th Century Spanish poet Lope de Rueda, the pattern of which certainly goes back to the Pancatantra story, a farmer tells his

- wife that he has just planted olives on the spot where they had kissed each other lately. The couple at once begins daydreaming about the olivecrop, etc.
29. P. J. Vinken and H. Mulder, *Observations on the symbolism of the smoking pot*, to be published.
 30. J. A. Hadfield, *Dreams and Nightmares*, Pelican Books, Middlesex, 167. Communioncup is hardly a symbol when taken in the literary sense of the word, *wood* is a familiar female symbol (Freud, *Traumdeutung* VI, E), and the *nose* is a frequently occurring symbol for the male genital (Rümke, in: *Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde*, 1950). See also E. M. Rodrigue, *Notes on menstruation*, *Int. Journ. Psychoanal.* 1955, 328-334, and H. J. Prill, *Reifungsprobleme in der Schwangerschaft*, *Z. Psychother. Med. Psychol.* 1957, 133-137.
 31. Cf. P. J. Vinken, *Non Plus Ultra, some observations on Geoffrey Tory's printer's mark*, *Netherlands' Yearbook for the History of Art*, 1956. Even today there is an editor in Paris with the broken pot as his trademark, in the Rue de Beaune. Cf. also the printer's mark of the Larousse-Editions, Paris.
 32. S. Gessner, *Schriften*, Zürich 1777.
 33. W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexicon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, Leipzig 1884-1937.
 34. Philostratus, *Imagines*, Bk. II, ii; F. Riklin, *Wunscherfüllung und Symbolik in Märchen*, Leipzig 1908, states, speaking about the tale *Vom Nusszweiglein*: "Das Kahlscheren bedeutet hier wohl, wie in der biblischen Erzählung von Simson und Delilah, eine Art Entmannung, eine entziehung männlicher Kraft . . . Wo das Märchen Haare erwähnt (speziell bei Männern), dürfen wir diese wohl fast immer in ihrer Bedeutung als Merkmal sexueller Kraft verwerthen."
 35. Jose Lopez-Rey, *Goya's Caprichos*, Princeton Univ. Press 1953, II, 136.
 36. Sully Prudhomme, *Poésies 1865-1866*, V. See also Shakespeare's *Passionate Pilgrim*, VII and XIII.
 37. Quoted by Siegen, o.c.
 38. C. G. Jung, *Integration of Personality*, 140-143; Hadfield, o.c., 166-167. The pot, particularly an earthen pot, has in all times been a current symbol for man's body, and his Creator has often been compared with a potter (as e.g. in the Bible, *Isaiah* 45,9; *Rom.* 9, 20-23; *I Peter* 3, 7; *Eccles.* 12,6). The breaking of an earthen pot, therefore, may signify death, as in *Jeremiah* (19, 11) and in later emblematic literature (*vanitas, humana fragilitas*). Probably the most recent example of a broken pot, whose symbolic meaning is closely related with that of the vase mentioned in the poem by Sully Prudhomme, and which also contains a strong

vanitas-character, appears in an advertisement on hormones by Schering in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* of February 23, 1957. The caption on the advertisement, which reads: *In the menopause when the feminine role falters . . .*, is illustrated by a cracked vase which had apparently fallen to the ground. Cf. also Freud, *Eine Kindheiterinnerung aus Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Ges. Werke, London 1947, Vol. XII, 15; Erich Kästner's *Fabian*, chapter 16; W. S. Heckscher, *Relics of Pagan Antiquity in Medieval Settings*, Journ. Warburg Institute, Vol. I, 1938, 211.

39. This article does not pretend to be an exhaustive or even thorough study of the theme of the broken pot. Its only purpose was to throw light upon a symbolical aspect of the motif, using there-with a more or less historical method. Numerous other instances of the broken pot in art and literature could be pointed out (the most recent appears to be Ossip Zadkine's sculpture, in the possession of Mrs. Wentworth, Chicago). The subject is certainly worthy of a comprehensive iconological study.

The Return of the Un-Repressed

Eros and Civilization; A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud,
by Herbert Marcuse. Beacon Press.

by

Richard M. Jones, Ph.D.

There are those, both in and out of psychoanalytic circles, who worry that psychoanalysis, in gaining membership among the recognized forces that shape our ethics, is becoming cowed and domesticated, and itself entirely too "ethical." If the voice of Freud comes to lose its irritance in transmission over generations, so the foreboding goes, who is to speak for the fantasied futures that may lie forgotten beneath repressed pasts?

For whatever else may be said of him Freud was an effective needler. When he was not making us squirm he was making us itch. Itching, he seemed to believe, was good for a man because it led to scratching, and scratching to awareness of the skin—and eventually to that which the skin contained. His germinal thesis, it might be said, was nothing less than a sensualization of the formula: God is man. . . It is good to know God . . . Therefore, know thyself.

To secularize such a thesis was to formulate a strategy for ethical revolution such as western civilization had never before to face. To enlist *medical science* in the cause of implementing such a strategy was political genius. In one move did Freud thus put the needle, as it were, in the hands of those who could most aim it with impunity. However, by the very finesse of this approach through "science" Freud disavowed himself of what for Marx was his Sunday punch:

the historical dialectic. Freud's was the approach of empirical reason; tied, albeit unblushingly, to the "reality" of his day. Marx appealed to the violent *act* by which "reality" was to be overthrown, and a social utopia somehow inevitably to be forthcoming. Freud, on the other hand, appealed to the stifled *urge to act* by which an individual, properly indoctrinated, might *privately* exact the greatest possible quantum of personal freedom from a society considered incurably sick. The *inner* chains were to be thrown off by learning to perceive the essential harmony that was the apparent bedlam inside one's own head. But one was not to "act out." To challenge those "realistic" limits that led society to think of jails was outside the scope of psychoanalysis. Thus Freud's armed truce with normality: the so-called "reality principle," which pronounced civilized cultures and the free development of human instincts to be incompatible. In no other way might one expect admission to the psychoanalytic utopia of "genitality" but by first "realistically" trimming one's instincts to genital proportions — no further, but thus far.

On closer inspection, then, the Freudian prescription contains a potent antidote against itself. It comes in the form of an addendum to "know thyself," which says, "... but be careful what you do with it." Many of today's analytically emancipated are secretly known to come acropper on this subtlety in the prescription — a point which someone more qualified than this reviewer ought really to develop in detail.

Fortunately, however, for those who insist it is better not to have itched at all than not to have itched and freely scratched, psychoanalysis has re-asserted its birthright in the hands of Professor Herbert Marcuse, who removes the anti-irritant with some deft surgery on the Freudian heart of civilization: the reality principle. In so doing he equips Freud with the dialectic that might have displaced the pessimism of "Civilization and its Discontents."

Marcuse is a new kind of psychoanalytic spokesman: the mature historian-philosopher-political scientist who has apparently studied, until he understood it, everything that Freud ever said. Although not, himself, an analyst, his grasp of the

sensitively counterbalanced inner tickings of orthodox psychoanalytic theory is unassailable. And while, as he says, the book aims to contribute not to psychoanalysis itself but to its philosophy, the Analytic Institutes will undoubtedly acclaim its technical clarities. For all this the book is beamed to the generally knowledgeable reader, although to be sure it is no addition to the how-to-find-yourself series, nor is it likely to deplete the ranks of Erich Fromm's readers.

High civilization, as it has shot up around us, says Marcuse, consists of people submitting to hierarchically dominating and dominated patterns of relating to one another, in order to gear their lives to precisioned performances in pursuit of a goal that has already been reached. The goal was the attainment of the economic pre-conditions for instinctual freedom, i.e., for the transformation of sexuality, and its repressive subordination to reproductive functions (actual or 'as if'), back into the spiritual-biological Eros, and wherever that might lead us as beings in pursuit of whole body-mind pleasure. Marcuse leaves us to our fantasies at this juncture, but it is at least refreshing to see a psychoanalytic theoretician putting "genitality" into perspective, rather than, as is usually the case, deriving all perspective from that admittedly treasurable condition. In perspective, then, genital Eros is a lame thing, an historical artifact, itself a residuum of repression. "Analysis," from this point of view, is indeed interminable, albeit the workshop for the "well analyzed" is no longer his own past but the imperfect present, which is his poorly institutionalized community.

Upon recognition of having overshot the mark, without having exercised the claim to which it entitled us, there attends much feeling of futility and despair. In avoidance of these the performances, once begun as realistic means to promised ends, are now continued as unquestioned ends in themselves, justified by long suffering allusions to "reality." From here the visions of man, once temporarily harnessed in the more urgently realistic interests of survival come under permanent constraints; the performer becomes more and more disciplined; the performances more and more empty.

Moreover, such is the tenacity with which we are taught to cling to "well-adjustment," we have forgotten how to remember our visions. And so, by means of entertainment industries we take to sublimating our sublimations. The promised deep freedom becomes a deep freedom. Social controls instead of being relaxed are strengthened, "not so much over the instincts as over consciousness, which if left free might recognize the work of repression in the bigger and better satisfaction of 'needs'." "The individuals who relax in this uniformly controlled reality recall, not the dream but the day. . . In their erotic relations they 'keep their appointments' — with charm, with romance, with their favorite commercials." "The aggressive impulse plunges into a void — or rather the hate encounters smiling colleagues, busy competitors, obedient officials, helpful social workers who are all doing their duty and who are all innocent victims. . ."

The heart of the matter is to be seen in the persistent dependence of existing social institutions on "alienated labor," i.e., unpleasant work — this, again, in the name of economic "necessities" that are no longer real; our economy having already developed from conditions of psychological deprivation to conditions of psychological plenty, during a long history of alienated labors. The human capacity to perform alienated labor is made possible by repressive government — both personalogical and political. The child will not otherwise learn how to do it. A surplus of repression (that amount necessary to develop the capacity for alienated labor) is *realistic* up to a certain level of economic development (roughly, the beginnings of automation). If, under conditions of less than psychological sufficiency, the reality principle that requires "surplus repression" is a long or even unending detour it is nevertheless a necessary and worthwhile detour. *Under such conditions* departures from such a principle would lead to extinction of social living in the ensuing competition over an insufficient supply. This is what led Freud to become resigned and obeisant in the pessimism of his "Civilization and its Discontents."

But what if we have already developed, or are on the

verge of developing, economic conditions of psychological plenty? What then can we say of governments that cannot dispense with alienated labor? What can we say of educational philosophies that uphold the teaching of repression under the illusion that the "performance principle" still represents reality? With the demise of a realistic call for "surplus-repression" in our personal development shall we degenerate into societies of sensuous ogres, or shall we emerge as unbound Prometheans free at last to enjoy for its own sake what our masochism has thus far mutely preserved? Are man's raw instincts inherently degenerate; and do they attain humane-ness only in sublimated forms? Or do they *become* degenerate in the impatient momentum of overcoming surplus-repression; and what if an economic sophistication could support their less-repressed development from birth?

Marcuse leaves us to our scratching on these matters, but within the fabric of Freudian theory he does establish a beach-head: as he calls it, "the hidden trend in psychoanalysis":

The notion that a non-repressive civilization is impossible [was] a cornerstone of Freudian theory. However, [the] theory contains elements that break through this rationalization; they shatter the predominant tradition of Western thought, and even suggest its reversal. His work is characterized by an uncompromising insistence on showing up the repressive content of the highest values and achievements of culture. In so far as he [succeeds in] this he denies the equation of reason with repression on which the ideology of culture is built. Freud's metapsychology is an ever-renewed attempt to uncover, and to question, the terrible necessity of the inner connection between civilization and barbarism, progress and suffering, freedom and unhappiness. . .

Moreover:

. . . the equation of freedom and happiness tabooed by the conscious is upheld by the unconscious. Its truth, although repelled by consciousness, continues to haunt the mind. It preserves the memory of past stages of individual development at which integral gratification is obtained. And the past

continues to claim the future: it generates the wish that the paradise be re-created on the basis of the achievements of civilization. . .

Psychoanalytic theory removes [fantasy] from the non-committal sphere of daydreaming and fiction and recaptures [its] strict truths. . . The weight of these discoveries must eventually shatter the framework in which they were made and confined. The liberation of the past does not end in its reconciliation with the present.

Marcuse is not the first to have challenged Freud on a point of ethnocentrism. He is not on that account, however, to be included among the Neo-Freudians. Indeed, he leaves the Revisionists only the bone of possible therapeutic expediency to explain what he sees as a too enthusiastic allegiance to existing social "realities." He, on the other hand, starts with the proposition that "no therapeutic argument should hamper the development of a theoretical construction which aims, not at curing individual sickness, but at diagnosing the general disorder."

In spelling out his diagnosis Marcuse departs from Freud only to enunciate his point of contention, proceeding then to weave it carefully back into orthodox psychoanalytic theory. The result is an improved theory.

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Serf Balázs: a "Boy without the Dike"; a Stage before the Solution of the Oedipal Conflict

by

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Alexander Grinstein, in an essay published in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* (1) tells us of the Dutch story of "the boy and the dike", current also in and after World War II, and examines it in the light of the analytical viewpoint. Grinstein gives the following account: "A little boy, son of a sluicer living near Haarlem, late one afternoon observed a tiny trickle coming from a small hole in a dike. He climbed up the dike and "without hesitation" put his finger into the little hole. . . He remained in this position throughout the entire night. His finger became numbed with cold, then his hand, then his arm, and finally his entire body. . . At dawn a clergyman . . . came to save him. He was praised for his deed and called a hero . . ." etc.

Grinstein, after having discussed similar tales, among others as far back as that one which is related in the famous German Muenchhausen-book, rightly comes to the conclusion that in the case of the Dutch boy, as well as in those of the other heroes "the heroic action . . . consists . . . of his triumph over his father" and that the material of the tale has to be interpreted in the light of the castration anxiety which precedes his triumph.

Recently, I came across a somewhat divergent Hungarian variation of the same story which is the more interesting because, apart from its comparative antiquity, it also evokes the need to modify some of Grinstein's further conclusions.

The story is related in a compilation published by Béla Tóth: "Hungarian Historical Anecdotes" the sources of which are considerably older (2) and runs in the following way. When King László (the Saint)* went to visit his sister in Dalmatia, he fell asleep in his coach at the precincts of a Hungarian town, Great-Kanizsa. He was so sound asleep that not even the rattling of the wheels succeeded to disturb him. It then happened that one of the pin-axles fell out without his retinue noticing. It could not well have been helped, because there was no piece of wood or iron there which could have replaced it. When the wheel was already on the verge of falling out, a Serf, by the name of Balázs, sprang to the rescue and put his thumb into the axle, running for a long time beside the coach before the king woke up. King László, moved by his loyalty granted him a reward he wished. Serf Balázs, however, wanted nothing for himself and he only asked the king to elevate all serfs of his village to the rank of nobility. László granted the wish and there flourished about 1500 noble families in that part of Hungary, even about 200-250 years ago. One eminent Hungarian statesman of the last Century also belonged to one of these.

The similarity between the story of Serf Balázs and that of the other variants lies: 1) first in the emphasis laid upon the heroic deed achieved by a partial, although a nevertheless rather grave, self-sacrifice, difficult to accomplish, which consists of a passive and self-afflicted suffering over a period of time, in contrast to other heroic deeds usually achieved by one single, quick and more or less aggressive action; 2) the moral issue of the "higher cause" for which it is undertaken; 3) and in the role of the finger, which, if inserted into a terrifying hole, saves people.

*It is to be noted that King László (Ladislas, Lancelot) who lived in the 11th Century A. D. and was extremely popular with the Hungarians, was a rather militant saint, of the St. George and St. Michael-type, a slayer of dragons, a rescuer of the distressed, etc., and his legend (partly recorded by nearly contemporaneous authors) must have, in a Christian disguise, sheltered the memory of a glorious heathen deity.

There is a smaller degree of similarity to be found in the detail of the consequences of the sacrifice; inasmuch as the Dutch boy and his variants get numb, cold, exhausted, etc., and even die, whereas Serf Balázs's finger gets crushed. This is not a great difference, although the latter variant indicates a more cruel, violent, even more apparent real castration than the former which are mitigated even in the case of the deadly issue and have, as a whole, a more veiled, a more symbolic appearance.

There are, however, two greater differences of consequence which, in a way, are bound to modify our views about the deeper meaning of the archaic gist of the tale than those propounded by Grinstein.

The first of these is inherent in the more detailed aftermath of the heroic deed in the Serf Balázs-story. Grinstein's versions unanimously agree in the triumph, even through death, of the hero: he is praised, elevated in rank and officially recognised. The elements of praise, elevation and official recognition are also contained in the Serf Balázs-version, the castration element, however, is more poignantly emphasized. Serf Balázs has no issue and seems to know that he never will have any: when invited to ask a favour, he does not ask it for himself, or for his family (i.e. descendants), but for his fellow countrymen, his community, his brethren, so to speak. Now here we must not forget that the value of nobility, especially in old times, laid to a great extent in its hereditary character. It was not intended to be bestowed upon one person only but upon him and his descendants. This element of plurality is not missing from this tale: not only does the hero ascend to a higher rank but his kinsmen as well. But these kinsmen of his are not his sons. Why not? The only acceptable explanation is: because he has none - obviously, because he cannot have any. If the thumb would not symbolise his penis, this subsequent and eminently castrated character of his person could not fit in the story. His wish, which is granted, has to be granted just because his sacrifice was so great as to justify it, and the favour has to constitute a symbolic substitute at the same

time for his lost ability to engender generations of noble-men like him. His kinsmen therefore, will be allowed to engender such generations for him - instead of him.

The second feature in which the stories deviate, presents itself in the actual circumstances under which the heroic deed is accomplished and in the conclusions which, drawn from it by Grinstein seem to be slightly inadequate by their generalisation, if we envisage the Hungarian variant as well.

Grinstein compares the "boy and the dike"- tale to different flood myths with which it has the common feature that the danger is represented by a *liquid*, the flow of which, if once started, will no longer be possible to be controlled. Therefore, the triumph of the boy consists in the feat that he is, in fact, able to *control his wish to urinate* and through it to control and relinquish his infantile (pregenital) sexual demands. This story is, according to Grinstein, based upon some cultural factors specifically Dutch, Flemish etc., i.e. the overemphasis laid upon the (phallic)- urethral eroticism symbolised also by the general admiration for the "Maneken Piss" in those parts, but which is repudiated at the same time by the same cultural group in question.

Now, as to the flood myths, it is true that they can mostly be traced back to an underlying more primitive version which originates every cataclysmic flood from a strong urinating desire of aggressive connotation on the part of a divine power, a god or a goddess, although not always a phallic one. (E.g. Sekhmet, in the Egyptian legend, although representing in a few other instances a phallic mother, in the flood myth does not show the phallic potentiality at all. It is true that she is destructive, that she is in a rage, but she urinates diffusely, without a target-directed aim, which would be characteristic of the phallic-urethral phase of the little boy, but she does it very much like a little girl - enuretic, or surprised by an early menarche. (3). The Dayaks of Borneo call only a heavy downpour of rain a *He-rain* (4). It seems also doubtful whether the sea (the common element of the versions quoted by Grinstein), which, as a natural force is usually endowed with eminently feminine paraphernalia and

symbolism would, when creating a flood resemble less this divine Sekhmet-Hathor in heaven, and more a masculine oceanic deity of the Poseidonios-type.

The flood, or the sea on the other hand, are also contributing to some versions of the anal type of the story (e.g. the Muenchhausen one), indicating the urethral side but perfunctorily.

The phallic-urethral-erotic meaning seems, therefore, not to be paramount throughout the whole development of the story, despite the "flood". - Now, the flood "motif" is definitely missing from the manifest content of the Hungarian version and is replaced by the danger of a *rotating wheel*. The powerful "motif" of the impending disaster is there none the less, just like in the special dread of cataclysm. Moreover, the disaster is threatening in this instance, not mankind as a whole, but an eminently powerful - and at the same time beloved - father-figure, the king, who does not represent mankind but appears as a highly individual personage.

As a matter of fact, the geographical situation of Hungary - which is not bordering any sea at all - could account for the missing "motif" of the threatening sea, if flood-sagas would not also exist in countries where there are no seas. Flood sagas on the contrary, do exist wherever there are at least major territorial lakes (in Hungary for instance, there are some sagas connected with lake Balaton) and, of course, everywhere in general, where there is much rain at times. There are parts in Hungary where rain (if it is only a drizzle and not a downpour is jokingly referred to as being produced by urinating infant angels - and as to the sex of these infant angels it is indicated by the name of a home-made sweet dish which is called (the term even appears in cookery-books) "angels' penises", while the shape and size of its single lumps does not leave any doubt as to the appropriateness of the comparison.)

As regards the rotating wheel in the Hungarian version and its connection with the powerful and beloved father-figure, it strangely reminds us of sun-myths in general and

of the father-symbolism contained therein. Freud (5) already pointed out that the eye of the eagle which is believed to be the only one which can bear to look at the shining sun, represents the son-hero who defies the father, and that children who try it, do it with the same unconscious motivation and purpose. In the Serf Balázs-story, the danger represented by the glowing, scorching sun is displaced from the father figure - the king - to the rotating wheel, the hole of which, unlike the hole in the dike, would immediately produce a burning, scorching pain to the finger inserted. (The bodily damage in a similar case would in fact be a burn). The father therefore, while remaining himself an entirely benevolent figure, does not revenge in the Serf Balázs-story, but on the contrary, is himself endangered by the dangerous thing - the rotating wheel - in his possession which seems to represent the vagina (dentata) of the mother-figure. Compared with the sun-disc which has no hole in it, it seems to possess a more transparent symbolism; if, however, we consider the penis-significance of the eye, it seems that the eagle Phoenix, or the aquiline son-hero wants similarly to pierce with his eye the dangerous scorching disk, and conquer it through this act. If we now add the detail that in the Greek myth, Helios is not himself the sun, but possesses a chariot with burning wheels which his son is too weak to manage, it seems to appear that the sun-disc represents for the son at that stage, a more or less threatening maternal vagina which is in the possession of the father who alone can deal with it (satisfy it) and is *not* a paternal attribute of phallic significance as usually believed. (We may draw here the attention to the ambivalent *and* maternal significance of the sun-disc, a fiery perpetual revolving wheel in the instance of the Ixion myth: to which Ixion, the incestuous son - the would-be raper of Hera, wife of the divine father Zeus - is tied in eternal punishment. The symbolism of this myth belongs, according to Róheim, originally to the nightmare. The raper of Hera is condemned to an eternal but frightful coitus. (6) It also appears that the common representation of the sun-disc with its beaming rays bears a resemblance to the Medusa-head;

with the meaningful difference, however, that while the phallic significance of the snakes is strongly emphasized in the representations of the Medusa, it nearly disappears in the image of the sun-disc. (Exceptions, as in those appearing in the imagination of Schreber, with his phallic sunbeams, may be explained by his latent homosexuality.) In countries where the sun represents a female person, e.g. Germany, the sunbeams symbolise her hair (we might perhaps rightly presume: in representation of her pubic hair), but bereft of its destructive, phallic, dangerous quality. While Medusa is the appropriate image of the vulva as phantasied by the boy fixated to the moment when he has the first time been struck by the castration dread (here I would, however, be inclined to consider the translation of Freud's term "Kastrationsschreck" as differentiated from "Kastrationssangst" with "castration alarm" a more appropriate term than "dread"), while the female sun-disc with its benevolent beam-locks depicts the image he will form of her later when already reconciled with the femininity of the opposite sex, of the vulva and of the surrounding pubic hair.

What happens *between* these two stages is exactly that which is related symbolically in Serf Balázs's story. The primary phallic wish, blind in its instinctual thrust, (and therefore connected with the concept of vision and blindness) which I should denominate in this instance as "the aquiline wish", does not yet truly reckon with the father's figure; although the Medusa-alarm has subsided, it still unconsciously dominates the scene. The secondary, subsequent wish to take and possess the sun-chariot, that is, its burning wheel, is already a strongly emphasized oedipal one: it is connected with the destructive wish against the father who, in order to gain access to the mother, has to be depossessed and at the same time has to be made impotent. Helios is impotent, at least during the time his son Phaeton is performing the heavenly course; and the Hungarian king, sitting, even dozing in the chariot which runs to destruction, is even more the image of an impotent man.

(It may be assumed that his sleeping represents, in over-

determination, also a phantasy, - although of secondary importance, - of the child, who, while supposed to sleep is instead witnessing the primal scene; namely, symbolising the wish: if only the father would sleep instead of him, and instead of the father he be the one who tries to satisfy mother and who fills with his finger - his penis - the dangerous hole.)

Here we could describe the developmental sequel (all under the impact of the castration-alarm) as follows:

As to the *dread*: (a) all danger is condensed in the maternal vulva; (b) father is a threatening, hostile (potent) King Laios on the cross-road who, even when already dead, will punish; and finally, (c) father is a benevolent and, with reference to punishment, an innocuous (impotent) figure, but the maternal vulva is still a threatening thing with which he alone is able to deal. (If he is not there, the chariot runs amok.) The image of the *female genital* passes at the same time through the following phases: (a) the phantasy of the phallic mother (with no threat); (b) the Medusa-ic one, as a symbolism of the castration-alarm, the incorrect, still phallic perception of the vulva, vague, partly still a phantasy, imbued with castration threat and with confusion about whether this latter originates from a non-descript outside danger (father) or from a definite one, i.e. mother; (c) the symbolism of King Laios, father of Oedipus, i.e. the castration threat and danger condensed into one (and as such, an emphatically paternal) image; and finally, (d) the danger re-projected and again condensed in the maternal vulva which becomes re-cathected, but instead of libido or aggression, with fear (the burning hole). This phase takes its origin from a regression caused by the slowly proceeding post-oedipal identification process in the boy, which only gradually endows the father with more and more benevolent attributes and from whose person, at the same time, aggressive cathexes are withdrawn.

Now, the hole from which the axle-pin has fallen out is certainly a representation of the vagina which has been abandoned by the penis, and the axle-pin falling out from

its place is an impotent penis which has no erection. It seems that as long as the axle-pin is there and "erect", everything is all right, the chariot is proceeding normally on its course, almost like in the Greek myth: it is only Helios who knows how to direct it. The little boy, amidst his oedipal struggle is panic-stricken by the idea, what would happen if the strong, controlling father would really fade out from the picture. The mere possibility of a fulfilment of his dangerous (previous) wish, i.e. of the father's elimination, - fills him now with horror. Although he has already resigned the aggressive oedipal wish to kill, he has not yet resigned the oedipal desire. This latter he feels now as a twofold danger: a danger to the good, benevolent, controlling father-figure, and also a danger - not to the mother! - but to himself, because the mother-figure has been inflated with his re-projected aggression and represents now again the castrating mother-figure who, satisfied only by the potent (paternal) pin-axle, would spitefully crush his, however daring, yet weak thumb. (Here, I would suggest that like seduction-phantasies, perhaps also castration threats "as emanating primarily from female persons" (7) could, in certain instances, represent a mere phantasy of the male child, aiming unconsciously at an accusation of the frustrating mother.) Anyhow, the maternal genital becomes dangerous again for a time and this in a regressive way (which in turn, may help to precipitate the dissolution of the Oedipus complex); with one great difference though: that the object's needs are already taken into consideration, as a factor which cannot be neglected any longer, like it was in preoedipal times. By inserting his finger in the hole, the boy in his phantasy fulfills therefore, a treble task: a) placating the dreadful vagina whose rightful possession: the penis (not an ingrown phallic snake, but a real erectile belonging to a separate but equally powerful person) has been taken away, - b) gratifying the original oedipal wishes (with the thumb, as a remainder of the oral phase, also those farther remote pre-oedipal ones), - and finally, c) suffering an oedipal punishment, still the classical one, for having offended both father and

mother: castration. This stage seems to have retained (and revived) a great quantity of pre-oedipal attachment to the mother and it also contains a regressive primary, but negative overestimation of the mother over the father, as a contrast to the preceding oedipal phase in which the father's power and possessive authority was in turn overestimated. It is also an attempt at shifting preoedipal and oedipal destructive aggressivity on to the mother-figure which in the oedipal phase was projected on to the father who, having become a benevolent figure, does not seem to deserve it any more. The mother-figure thus becomes invested with a somewhat greater amount of destructive dangerousness than she was already (a) in the pre-oedipal phase (the figure of the bad, the non-gratifying mother), (b) in the phase of the castration alarm, and (c) in her alliance with the father during the oedipal conflict.

The Serf Balázs-story seems therefore, to represent a *last* stage of the oedipal conflict *before* its final solution: namely, before the dangerous figure of the ambivalently phallic-and-castrated mother gives way to a benevolent but at the same time now already feminine mother-figure of the post-oedipal development. The benevolent and feminine mother-figure seems to appear, for the little son a little later than the benevolent father-figure. She appears as such at about that phase when the father has not yet been entirely internalised as an ego-ideal or paternal super-ego for the son, but is nearly on the verge of becoming one. Like the mother's figure becomes more feminine, the father's figure also tends to acquire a greater masculinity at that stage, inasmuch as from hence on he is *tolerated* as a potent man.

When Oedipus met Laios on his chariot, there certainly existed a similar situation; but Oedipus solved it accordingly to the earlier stage, the climax of the classical incestuous complex which he represented, by castrating and/or killing the father after he had been rendered impotent; - while Serf Balázs represents the *new stage*, in which the male child *abstains* from the deed in his phantasy by a sacrifice, a symbolic punishment which is included in the phantasy just

because he already wants to *preserve* the benevolent father-figure. This seems, by the way, to be the missing link between puberal salvation phantasies and Oedipal destruction. King Laios behaves in a hostile way towards the humble way-farer - the son - while King László does not. The great difference between these two stages consists just in this aspect. The dreadful father-figure of the Oedipus-myth has already receded and changed into a good one in the Serf Balázs-tale. His impotence, therefore, is only a temporary and a minor one, neither despicable nor to be ridiculed (like that of the biblical Noah); moreover, he has not only to be spared but even to be saved. This is also the feature which brings the erstwhile tragical story to a somewhat less sombre, more cheerful solution. It contains mankind's optimism towards human development once it passed the Oedipal cliff. Of course, this cannot be achieved before, in the phase depicted in the Serf Balázs story, the price is paid for it. This price consists during that phase, in the mother again becoming for a time the one who threatens with castration. She is the one who has to be invested by projection with the hostile, aggressive energy not yet neutralized nor sublimated which, after having been deflected from the father, was left in a floating state, ready to be cathected. (By the way, this may also partly account for the temporary hostility of the male child in the latency period against the whole female sex, little girls included.) At the same time both father (the future super-ego), and the boy-hero himself have to be idealised and glorified: this is the substitute gratification which the boy can at once attain in exchange for those he has just given up.

To do justice also to Grinstein's urethral theory, one thing may be added. The imagined burning pain in the finger indicates an underlying (latent) urethral phantasy, even in the Serf Balázs story, although that one seems to represent a stage when urethral eroticism does not serve as a focal point any longer. It seems to have as a past but not entirely relinquished phase still upkept some of its former - perhaps also regressive - influence and cathexes.

There is one more thing to be said about this stage and its poetical symbol as expressed in the Serf Balázs-story. It seems to have a certain connection also with the *Isakower phenomenon*. The Isakower phenomenon may, according to Angel Garma (8) consist of images of discs that may revolve, or grow larger, or hum, or come nearer, or go away etc. Similarly, the noise of Ixion's wheel is, according to Róheim (6) terrible; it is like a nightmare. Yet, his patients have described the process of falling asleep also as a kind of rotating. Inasmuch as the Isakower phenomenon has a nightmare appearance, we may rightly suppose here that apart from its apparent and obvious breast-symbolism, a urethral urge might also contribute to its emergence, especially to its growing discomfort, and to some formal elements of its content. The Serf Balázs story suggests such an Isakower phenomenon *of the urethral type*. The chariot of the king comes nearer, its wheels revolve, are growing larger, producing (like they would also in reality) a sound which in this phantasy, and given the nocturnal setting, would probably less represent a humming than a snoring of the parents (or the father) asleep. In both cases the danger grows proportionally. It is true, there is no satisfactory explanation for the special shape of circles, discs or wheels in motion, but apart from the possibility of slight dizziness, it seems as if they were in a way also symbolic, projected organ representations of the weak urethral sphincter of the infant (condensed into a compound figure with the breast symbolism). The sphincter is, in fact, circular, it is a muscle-ring, the effort of which to remain continent may well take up the imago of these nightmarish pseudo-hallucinations. The semi-circular course of the sun-chariot in the Helios-myth, on the other hand, would perhaps represent the urinary urge coupled with the genital excitation which, reaching its climax, (perhaps having been prompted by a witnessing of the primal scene) in a half-asleep, half-wakeful state of drowsy desorientation would either produce enuresis, or abrupt full awakening and screaming of the infant to be taken to the pot and at the same time to be relieved of its sexual (and

incestuous) fears by the soothing effect of the parent's attention and the alleviation of his tension (at least, the urinary one); - or else, the short continuation of the sleepful state in the form of a nightmare, starting with the Isakower phenomenon in which the breast-symbolism, equally circular, would merge into the urethral symbolism and produce a somewhat protracted awakening.

This would be a compromise on the part of the child who does not wish any more to disturb the parents' intercourse on the spot, but has not yet given up entirely the wish to be considered as third and important participant who also has rights to an (at least partial) gratification. Qualms about this "right" are dramatically symbolised in his castration fear as represented by the Serf Balázs story.

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Richard and His Shadow World

by

James A. S. McPeck

The appeal of *Richard II* to modern audiences may be attributed in part to Shakespeare's constant portrayal of Richard as a character dominated by a set of fantasies (1) which manifest themselves regularly in his actions and speech and which compose a pattern of behavior that Dr. Ernest Jones has named the God-complex. (2) Since these fantasies occur to some extent in every man (as Shakespeare appears to realize in that he has Richard identify himself with every man), everyone finds some affinity with Richard as the action develops, and this feeling helps to build the fascination that the antic king arouses. But whereas with normal people the sense of reality controls these fantasies and modifies their expression, with Richard a failing sense of reality weakens his inhibitions and his fantasies tend to become real to him. Just how far Richard's feeling for reality is weakened it is not easy to say, but the evidence suggests that it is feeble. People of this sort who are thus dominated by illusions but who still maintain enough contact with reality to give otherwise a general impression of being normal are today recognized by psychiatrists as having some characteristics of schizophrenia and are known as schizoids or ambulatory schizophrenics. (3)

Was Shakespeare aware of this consistent pattern in Richard or did he simply assemble the pattern without realizing that he was describing a special state of mental disintegration? Shakespeare first of all devises conduct. Though he does not probe deeply into the causes for Richard's condition (as he does later for Coriolanus), he does have him exhibit

his symptoms in full before our eyes. The portrait is without contradictions, and it is probable that Shakespeare (as always) knew what he was about. As Horace recommends for new and strange characters, the pattern of Richard's strange behavior is sustained from beginning to end.

It is generally agreed that Shakespeare had no literary model or source for this curious portrayal. The Elizabethan psychologists could and possibly did suggest Richard's mercurial qualities, (4) and other features can be perhaps traced separately to like sources. Shakespeare's own observation of Elizabeth or Essex may have suggested even more. Certain accounts of Richard's life indicate that he may have died insane. (5) But though Shakespeare may have known of these views, he does not advert to them: his Richard is clearly not insane, though he is a man of disturbed mentality. In the eyes of York, Richard is one in whom "will doth mutiny with wit's regard" (II. i. 28). (6) Gaunt speaks of his behavior as a "rash fierce blaze of riot" destined shortly to burn itself out, and also affirms the illness of Richard (II. i. 90-99), though he diagnoses only its political symptoms. In like views, Northumberland, Ross, and Willoughby depict the political behavior of the king (II. i. 241-262); and the Archbishop of York later dwells on Richard's disease as one of surfeiting and wanton hours (*II Henry IV*. i. 54-58). But as with similar estimates of Brutus, Caesar, Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth made by various characters, none of these statements analyzes Richard's nature, which is to be appreciated only in the full scope of his self-revelation. In speech and action Richard slowly reveals himself as a character dominated by his fantasy world. Some of the features of his complex have long been recognized in him, but the extensive correspondence to its main characteristics does not appear to have been observed.

The most striking feature of Richard's character is, as is well known, a strong narcissism, (7) which manifests itself in many ways and which is also the outstanding and controlling feature of the God-complex. In person resplendent, Richard is extremely self-conscious, oddly preoccupied with his appearance. Even in the most serious situations, instead of

immediately considering possible plans of action, Richard is first intent upon his emotional responses, relating them at times to external changes in his complexion. Gaunt's "frozen admonition" makes his royal cheeks pale (II. i. 117-119). Hearing of the loss of his armies, he again evaluates the meaning of the disaster in like terms:

But now the blood of twenty thousand men
Did triumph in my face, and they are fled.
And till so much blood thither come again,
Have I not reason to look pale and dead?

(III. ii. 76-79)

Shakespeare untiringly emphasizes this narcissism, bringing it to its great resolution in the shattering of the shadow-face in the deposition scene.

This narcissism so deeply controls Richard that all his other attributes stem from it, as is characteristic of the complex. (8) It manifests itself in self-love, marked by a love for personal adornment, self-pity, and related self-dramatization (defined by Jones as a narcissistic-exhibitionistic tendency). Thus at Flint Castle, as Richard contemplates the imminence of his deposition, his thought, conditioned by his nature, turns first to his jewels and robes which weigh as importantly as his subjects; even his subjects are to be traded for a pair of carved saints, sensed here as objects of personal adornment rather than true symbols of felt religion, and he develops the idea fittingly in a long distributive figure:

I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown,
My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood,
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints,
And my large kingdom for a little grave,
A little little grave, an obscure grave. . . .

(III. iii. 147-155)

It may be argued that in using these symbols, Richard is not just playing the poet, but shows a tendency to regress to the primitive or archaic thinking symptomatic of his condition:

(9) with him the symbol is a substitute for the reality behind it — that is, the symbol has become the reality. For him kingship has come to mean no more than its trappings.

At the same moment his ever-present self-pity reaches a masochistic pitch in which he relishes the grief that would make a normal man speechless. He will yield his kingdom "for a little grave, A little little grave, an obscure grave"; or they can bury him in the highway, where his subjects, now trampling on his heart, can trample on his head. Seeing pity in his favorite Aumerle, he addresses him, visualizing himself and his cousin as children playing with their griefs: (10)

Or shall we play the wantons with our woes,
And make some pretty match with shedding tears?
As thus — to drop them still upon one place
Till they have fretted us a pair of graves
Within the earth; and therein laid — there lies
Two kinsmen digged their graves with weeping eyes

(III. iii. 164-169)

He is brought back to reality by the pained embarrassment of his nobles:

Would not this ill do well? Well, well, I see
I talk but idly and you laugh at me.

Richard's exhibitionistic tendency manifests itself in all his appearances: he delights in attention and self-display. At the trial by combat when the attention is focused on the contesting nobles, he dramatically draws it to himself by throwing down his warder. At Flint Castle his manner suggests that he expects to overawe Bolingbroke and the rebel lords by his mere appearance (III. iii. 61-76). That Bolingbroke and York play up the splendor of Richard's appearance emphasizes his love for display. In the deposition scene, though subdued in fact, he dominates the action. The surrender of his crown is a glittering opportunity for his self-dramatization. With his tears, his hands, his tongue, his breath he relinquishes sovereignty. And though this behavior is seemingly renounced with the breaking of the mirror, the gesture itself indicates his disturbed condition, and Richard's vanity, his love for display, is undiminished by grief, as is

apparent from his later curiosity about how roan Barbary went under Bollingbroke.

Yet another aspect of Richard's extreme narcissism is his tendency towards fantasies of omnipotence as seen in his special interpretation of his role as vicegerent of God on earth. (11) The merest hint for this development of his character is provided by Holinshed:

Sir John Bushy in all his talks when hee proponed any matter unto the King, did not attribute to him titles of honour, due and accustomed, but invented unused terms, and such strange names as were rather agreeable to the divine maiestie of God, than to any earthly potentate. The Princee, being desirous inough of all honour, and more ambitious than was requisite, seemed to like well of his speech, and gave good eare to his talke. (12)

In *Richard II* this hint is amplified enormously through two images, both symptomatic of the God-complex, those of the sun-king and the Son of God or Christ. (13) In presenting Richard as a sun-king, Shakespeare is obviously drawing on familiar lore, and in particular on the knowledge that Richard's emblem was the sun emerging from clouds; further, he was to use the same image effectively for Hal. But whereas with Hal the image is felt as simple metaphor, with Richard it becomes a near-obsession. In the scene presenting his return from Ireland he identifies in splendor with the sun. Now that he has returned from the Antipodes, treason and conspiracy will be dissolved by his mere appearance:

So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke,
Who all this while hath revell'd in the night,
Whilst we were wand'ring with the Antipodes,
Shall see us rising in our throne, the East,
His treasons will sit blushing in his face,
Not able to endure the sight of day,
But self-affrighted tremble at his sin.

(III. ii. 47-53)

Faced with unpleasant reality, Richard has no plan of action. His ego instead regresses to primitive or archaic thinking, the method of magic as opposed to a normal response which would try to meet this situation and control it with real

measures. Here and elsewhere Richard substitutes a more agreeable world of fantasy for distasteful reality. (14) Properly played, the scene makes one aware of the king's resort to fantasy as a release. The other actors stand ill at ease, and little gestures indicate their barely polite tolerance of Richard's fancies. At one moment he exults in the thought that God's angels are his invisible defense against Bolingbroke (III. ii. 58-61); in the next his spirits plummet at the news of the dispersed Welsh army (III. ii. 64-74). Then with a prompting from Aumerle he instantly recaptures the illusion of his power:

Is not the King's name twenty thousand names? (15)
 Arm, arm, my name! A puny subject strikes
 At thy great glory. Look not to the ground,
 Ye favorites of a king. Are we not high?
 High be our thoughts. (III. ii. 85-89).

This cycle of alternate confidence in his omnipotence ("An easy task it is to win our own") and instant, unreasoning despair as reality breaks the illusion is repeated in a vivid pattern throughout the scene. So far is Richard subject to the illusion of his power as God's representative that he apparently believes that forces of nature (storms and pestilence) will destroy those who offend him (III. iii. 82-89). (16) In the grasp of this illusion he fancies that he does the earth favor by touching it with his royal hands (III. ii. 6-11). Weeping, smiling, like a mother (and matriarchal features are not uncommon in delusions of this sort) (17) he greets *his* earth, and he even conjures small creatures of his earth, spiders, toads, nettles, and snakes to oppose and thwart Bolingbroke (III. ii. 14-26). The very normal Bishop of Carlisle gently reproves his presumption, reminding him that men must use the means that God provides:

Fear not, my lord. That Power that made you king
 Hath power to keep you king in spite of all.
 The means that heaven yields must be embrac'd
 And not neglected; else if heaven would,
 And we will not, heaven's offer we refuse,

The proffered means of succour and redress.

(III. ii. 27-32)

But Richard is not only a sun-king whose presence he hopes will dazzle and disperse his enemies. As the representative of Christ on earth, he shows a tendency to identify with Christ in his trials and sorrows, (18) and Shakespeare develops the theme at greater length than appears to be commonly realized, and with pointed irony. The image is not necessarily meant to arouse sympathy for Richard, but rather to record the historic view of the Richard faction and at the same time to develop further Richard's complex. Patently the ironic contrast between Richard's true nature and that of Christ, so obvious to us, would be appreciated by the Elizabethan audience. We are prepared for the identification through certain aspects of Richard's view of himself as a sun-king. At his coming, as when Christ comes to judge the sinners, the guilty will "stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves" (III. ii. 41-46). (19) It is almost to be expected that in the next breath he would assume that God's deputy has supernatural protection: to every soldier that Bolingbroke has conscripted, a glorious angel will be opposed (III. ii. 56-61) in Richard's defense. (20) Some in the audience would perhaps remember that Christ rejected the temptation of claiming supernatural protection: Richard in claiming such aid inverts, as his conduct does throughout the play, the Christ symbol. In the same scene, when Richard mistakes Scroop's ironic report that Bushy, Green and Wiltshire have made peace with Bolingbroke, he condemns them as Judases:

Three Judases, each one thrice worse than Judas!
Would they make peace? Terrible hell make war
Upon their spotted souls for this offense!

(III. ii. 132-134)

The inversion of Christ's attitude is recognized by Scroop, who responds:

Sweet love, I see, changing his property
Turns to the sourest and most deadly hate.
Again uncure their souls. Their peace is made
With heads and not with hands.

In the deposition scene his identification with Christ and its ironic implications become yet more apparent. We are prepared for Richard's assumption of the pose of the martyred Christ by the Bishop of Carlisle's ardent but specious defense of Richard in which he predicts that if the deposition occurs, England will be called the field of Golgotha (IV. i. 136-144). Richard does not hear and does not need such prompting. Scanning the assembled parliament and the courtiers of Bolingbroke, he finds that while Christ had but one Judas, all are Judases to him:

Yet I well remember
The favors of these men. Were they not mine?
Did they not sometime cry "All hail!" to me?
So Judas did to Christ; but he in twelve,
Found truth in all but one; I in twelve thousand, none.

(IV. i. 167-171)

They are not only Judases, but those who are passively accepting his deposition are Pilates, washing their hands and delivering him to crucifixion:

Nay, all of you that stand and look upon
Whilst that my wretchedness doth bait myself,
Though some of you, with Pilate, wash your hands,
Showing an outward pity, yet you Pilates
Have here delivered me to my sour cross,
And water cannot wash away your sin.

(IV. i. 237-241)

As Richard's sweet love turns to sourest hate, as is characteristic of victims of the complex when they are offended, (21) so the redeeming cross becomes a sour cross for him.

At least by strong suggestion, if not by direct allusion, Shakespeare sustains the image with its negative implications in the rest of the action. In Act V, after Richard has been sent to Pomfret, York recounts for his duchess the story of Richard's coming to London (his Jerusalem):

... dust was thrown upon his sacred head;
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
His face still combating with tears and smiles
(The badges of his grief and patience),

That had not God for some strange purpose steel'd
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
And barbarism itself have pitied him.
But heaven hath a hand in these events,
To whose high will we bound our calm contents.

(V. ii. 30-37)

Richard's patience here, together with his strange inability to resort to action against his enemies, might appear to be modelled on the exemplary patience of Jesus. The king of griefs is perhaps meant to imitate the Man of Sorrows in his patient endurance of affliction. But Richard does not maintain this pose. In the closing scene he renounces his patience for despairing violence ("Patience is stale, and I am weary of it"), beats the keeper, and presently kills two servants (Holmshed has four tall men), consigning their souls to Hell, all in marked contrast to the man who died between two thieves with forgiveness for his tormentors. That Piers of Exton interprets Richard's desperation as valiancy only heightens the irony, as likewise does Richard's own certainty of his salvation ("Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high"). (22)

Since Richard has illusions of omnipotence, he shows signs of entertaining fantasies of omniscience, as is characteristic of his complex. A prophet of time to come, he predicts disasters of civil war and pestilence with an assurance that impresses even his enemies (III. iii. 85-100). Later, in *Henry IV*, Shakespeare has Warwick attack Richard's supposed prescience with a logical explanation of his "perfect guess" (III. i. 80-89).

Another aspect of the complex (as observed by Dr. Jones) is Richard's interest in psychology, his love for interpreting situations and examining his own thought-processes and those of others. People of this sort, in whom the unconscious has come to dominate the ego may be acutely perceptive in some directions of the unconscious urges of others. Hence Richard's intuitive sensing of the motives of Bolingbroke is characteristic, a perception that is counterbalanced by his complete insensibility to the serious obligations of kingship and a consequent inability to devise any plan of

action to oppose the enemy. He is aware of the menace of Bolingbroke from the start:

How high a pitch his resolution soars!

(I. i. 109)

A brace of draymen bid God speed him well

And had the tribute of his supple knee,

With 'thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends';

As were our England in reversion his,

And he our subjects' next degree in hope.

(I. iv. 33-37)

Instead of being intent, as his counselors belatedly are, on how to meet this threat, he helplessly divines Bolingbroke's nebulous purpose and perhaps even shapes that purpose by expressing his willingness to surrender his crown before Bolingbroke, so far as we can see, has consciously entertained the idea of taking it.

His love for examining his thought-processes leads him to interpret in detail each situation, as is illustrated by his speeches in the deposition scene and, better still, by the extensive exposition of his thoughts in prison. Associated with this interest in observation of self and situation is Richard's love for language, shown in his habit of interpreting every situation in terms of rhetorical display (Shakespeare probably did not mean us to admire Richard's rhetorical extravagance any more than his courtiers do). This interest in language for its own sake is a noteworthy trait of the complex. (23)

With Richard's love for rhetoric may be associated his extreme tendency toward ritual, his habit of reducing every situation to ceremony. This use of ceremony, when controlled by reason, is normal, a stabilizing social influence, and most of the characters in the play resort to its devices at times, as Tillyard indicates. But the tendency becomes abnormal when carried to excess, as it is with Richard, who converts every situation to ceremony. With him his devotion to ritual appears to mark a continuing regression to conceptual thinking, an attempt to reconstitute the world of the past as an escape from an oppressive reality. (24) This tendency in Richard is well illustrated in the ceremony of his farewell to his wife,

in which the form of love is projected as a substitute for reality (careful analysis of the scene, together with other evidence in the play, suggests that Richard loves only himself).

It is but natural that anyone with these propensities should never seriously question the rightness of his conduct and that he should justify his proceedings simply by virtue of his inherent right. Richard's behavior neatly fits the pattern here. He does not claim infallibility or righteousness, but why should he? As God's deputy, he is a "rightful" king. Criticism arouses anger in him, as when he resents Gaunt's sharp criticism:

A lunatic lean-witted fool,
Presuming on an ague's privilege,
Dar'st with thy frozen admonition
Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood
With fury from his native residence.

(II. i. 115-119)

But he does not attempt to meet or refute Gaunt's charges, nor will he alter his ways. The sense of Gaunt's serious accusations makes no impression, save for his resentment: those who have age and sullens like Gaunt should die (II. i. 139-140). (25)

When York in turn reproaches Richard with his faults (some of them crimes), Richard, who has ignored the charges or only idly attended them as matters of no consequence, exclaims, "Why, uncle, what's the matter?" (II. i. 186). Moved by Richard's imperviousness, York makes the charge more specific: if Richard seizes Bolingbroke's estates, he violates the laws of succession by which he himself is king. But Richard is above human law; his will is sufficient reason for his action: "Think what you will, we seize into our hands His goods, his money, and his lands" (II. i. 208-209). York punctuates his open disapproval by leaving, and in the next moment, after sending Bushy to expedite the plundering of Bolingbroke's estates, this strange king appoints York lord governor of England for the period of his absence in Ireland ("For he is just and always lov'd us well"). Later, in

a parallel pattern of behavior, when he reflects on the dispersal of his forces and the death of his favorites, he does not connect his plight with his misdemeanors, but muses instead on the fortunes of kings: kings, he asserts, die in prison or from violence, and none peacefully. His fortunes are the universal lot (III. ii. 155-160). It does not occur to him to consider that his lot might be the result of his conduct.

It is manifest that Richard, true to the conditions of his complex, is incapable of really conceiving his guilt or suffering remorse for his sins. (26) Once or twice he seems to recognize his misconduct, but the recognition is superficial and quickly put aside for the vanities that obsess his mind. Thus for a moment he senses reality in the deposition scene as he scans his features (unworn by the cares that would line the face of a good ruler) in the mirror: his glory is a brittle glory; the face in whose glory he believed is a shadow, not a reality. Even his external shows of grief are (he realizes for a moment, with Bolingbroke's help) but shadows of the true grief.

Boling. The shadow of your sorrow hath destroy'd
 The shadow of your face.

Rich. Say that again.
The shadow of my sorrow? Ha! let's see!
'Tis very true: my grief lies all within;
And these external manners of laments
Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
That swells with silence in the tortured soul.

(IV. i. 293-298)

Though Richard's disease has not progressed to the point that he has lost all contact with reality, his behavior, as recorded in this great key passage, is suggestive of the schizophrenic who attempts to regain contact with the objective world, but who succeeds only in recapturing the shadows of that world, namely the word representations. (27) Richard has a moment of normal insight here as he perceives that he has been deluding himself with shadows. But in the next

moment, as earlier with Northumberland (IV. i. 229-236), he transfers the blame:

O, good! Convey? conveyors are you all,
That rise thus nimbly by a true king's fall.

(IV. i. 317-318)

And in the prison scene, a discord in the music reminds him that he has wasted time and that time wastes him (V. v. 42-49); but his reflections turn from this seeming realization of personal guilt to his habitual solace in rhetorical self-pity. His time, he says, "Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy." He has already analyzed the situation to suit his condition: he suffers from discontent, yes; every man is discontented until he becomes nothing (and one must recall Macbeth's soured conclusion that life is vanity). No matter what sort of life I might have led, he rationalizes, I should have still been discontent. His consideration of the lives he might have led is a characteristic evasion of the facts about the life he has led.

This bias has been preserved in Richard through the play. Early he tells us that his subjects, and not he, are to blame for his downfall:

Revolt our subjects? That we cannot mend.
They break their faith to God as well as us.

(III. ii. 100-101)

And after his deposition he exclaims to his queen:

A King of beasts indeed! If aught but beasts,
I had been still a happy king of men.

(V. i. 34-35)

And in prison he is not concerned with his kingdom sick with civil disorder (as Henry IV is at the end of his reign), but with the vanity, as we have seen, that roan Barbary went so proudly under Bolingbroke. He can implore the forgiveness of the absent Barbary for his railing at him, but he has none for Henry of Lancaster.

Richard's fantasy in prison is in itself a special symptom of his disorder. It takes the shape of a rebirth fantasy, which is similar in nature to those experienced by schizophrenics,

a fantasy which is based on the patient's unconscious desire to reconstruct his disordered universe. (28) Richard's still-breeding thoughts seek refuge in theology, but find contradictions of his own making (V. v. 11-17); yet other thoughts bearing on possible escape from imprisonment and on the vicissitudes in the lives of kings and beggars, all in themselves barely suppressed queries as to what has gone wrong in his management of his life, end in futility:

But whate'er I be,
Nor I, nor any man that but man is,
With nothing shall be pleased till he be eased
By being nothing. (V. v. 38-41)

In this negative way Richard wins reassurance: his search for a solution to his dilemma leads him to the conclusion that all men are discontent till they sink back into nothingness — a conclusion which, since it excuses himself, is obviously not one leading to a better mental health.

Seen from this perspective, all the behavior and the utterances of Richard fall into one large unified pattern, forming one of Shakespeare's earliest studies of diseased mentality, acutely observed and unerringly integrated. Dominated by his complex, Richard continually substitutes his fancies for action. Lost in the dream of his glory, remote from reality, he is equally incapable of either well-considered civil policy or military strategy, and natural prey for flatterers like Bushy and Green. That some people of the time, including Elizabeth herself, should be disturbed by so clinical a portrait and suspect its topical reference is not surprising. Whatever Shakespeare intended, he created in Richard II a haunting character whose case is hopeless from the start.

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NOTES

1. I wish to thank Dr. Daniel C. Dawes and Dr. Lydia M. Dawes of the Boston Psychoanalytic Society for their many suggestions and expert counsel, without which I should not have had the courage to attempt this study. Its merits in many ways are theirs: the faults are mine.

2. "The God Complex", *Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth Press, 1951), pp. 244-265. According to Dr. Jones, the God-complex is "generally the product of an unconscious phantasy in which [people] identify their personality with that of God." The fantasy is widespread, and everyone perhaps has some of its attributes. Some men have them to a marked degree, and if such men become insane, they develop the delusion that their fantasy is reality. More commonly, however, the sense of reality controls its external manifestations. Its major aspects grow out of an embracing narcissism that manifests itself in self-love, a narcissistic-exhibitionistic tendency, and self-pity. Narcissistic exhibitionism (as distinguished from basic exhibitionism) tends to be aloof, inaccessible, surrounded with mystery. In extreme cases this desire to be inaccessible leads to the conception of oneself as a sun god who must be screened from people who might otherwise be destroyed by his magnificence; but in more normal people such fantasies remain in the unconscious. Despite this aloofness such people like to talk about themselves and are always analyzing their thoughts. They love language for its own sake and are keenly interested in psychology. They have omnipotence and omniscience fantasies, and tend to identify with the god of their religion. They are unforgiving when offended, but lenient in judging offenses against others. They resent authority, crave love and praise, but show indifference to hostile opinion.

Dr. Jones' analysis of the God-complex is necessarily a composite, and for any isolated case correspondence in every detail with his findings is, as he says, not to be expected. Richard as a king will naturally not have the repressions that a common citizen has. Where Richard will use the sun image as a right, the commoner may resort simply to a mysterious aloofness. Richard's aloofness, apart from its indication in his peculiar use of the sun image, may be seen in his avoidance of those who do not flatter his ego, his inaccessibility (as York remarks, II. i. 17-29) to good counsel.

3. This term appears to have been first used by Dr. Gregory Zilboorg to describe a type of schizophrenia: "The individual may appear normal in all respects, even sane and almost worldly; he may sometimes give the impression of a warm personality. On occasions, admittedly rare, he may even have a position and keep it, doing not very well and not very badly, but keeping it. Intellectually he may not appear brilliant, but he will be adequate, almost always with a cultural

bent" ("Abulatory Schizophrenias", *Psychiatry*, IV [1941], 152).

4. See J. W. Draper, "The Character of Richard II", *PQ*, XXI (1942), 228-236.

5. In his edition of Créton, Benjamin Williams considered at length the conjectures or rumors that Richard fled to Scotland and died there in "a state of real or apparent madness" (*Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richard Deux Roy Dengleterre*, London, 1846, pp. 1-1xx).

6. I have used G. L. Kittredge, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (Boston, 1936) as my text for *Richard II*.

7. John Palmer (*Political Characters of Shakespeare*, London, 1952, p. 152) remarks this characteristic, but does not seem to recognize its special implications. O. J. Campbell speaks of Richard's sense of the dramatic values of every situation as his most striking feature (*The Living Shakespeare*, New York, 1949, p. 180), a view which emphasizes one aspect of his narcissism.

8. Jones, p. 247.

9. See Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1945), pp. 46-51, 421-422. I am much indebted to this text and its extensive bibliography.

10. The fancies of Richard at this moment and certain other times (in particular, in his invocation of toads and spiders and often his behavior) suggest an obvious infantilism or immaturity. Jones (p. 265) calls attention to the resemblance between these characteristics of the complex and those of the "manic" phase of child development described by Melanie Klein.

11. This attitude is of course a characteristic of schizophrenia if carried to the point of actual belief, and represents a regression to primitive thinking. Fenichel (p. 421, citing Otto Rank, "Der Doppelgänger", *Imago*, III, 1914), remarks: "The belief in one's own omnipotence is but one aspect of the magical-animistic world that comes to the fore again in narcissistic regressions.

"That narcissistic daydreams are actually believed and become delusions, that the patients feel themselves as king, president, or God is due to the loss of reality testing." See also R. C. Bak, "Dissolution of the Ego, Mannerism, and Delusion of Grandeur", *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, XCVIII (1943), 457-463.

12. 1577 *The Last Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande . . . by Raphaell Holinshed, at London, Imprinted for John Hosine*, pp. 1094-1095. Somewhat thinner suggestions of the idea may be found in *Woodstock*, in which Richard rebukes the rebels as follows:

Although we could have easily surprised,
Dispersed and overthrown your rebel troops
That draw your swords against our sacred person,

The highest God's anointed deputy,
 Breaking your holy oaths to heaven and us,
 Yet of our mild and princely clemency

We have forborne

(*Woodstock A Moral History*, ed. A. P. Rossiter, London, 1946, p. 162, V. iii. 55-61).

A chronicle of 1471 also notes a tendency to a mysterious aloofness in Richard: "After this, the kyng in solemne daies and grete festis, in whiche he wered his croune, and wente in his rial array, he leet ordeyne and make in his chambir, a trone, wheryne he was wont to sitte fro aftir mete unto enensong tyme, spekyng to no man, but overlokyng alle menn; and yf he loked on any man, what astat or degre that evir he were of, he most knele" (*An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI. Written before the year 1471* . . . ed. the Rev. John Sylvester Davies, Camden Society, 1956, p. 12).

V and Henry VI. Written before the year 1471 . . . ed. the

13. Though both of these images come naturally to Shakespeare in connection with his basic materials, his special use of the images makes Richard a typical example of the fantasy, which is as old as the nature of man himself and which is at the root of man's original conception of God.

14. Fenichel (p. 50) finds that such people may resort to two types of fantasy, namely "creative fantasy, which prepares some later action, and daydreaming fantasy, the refuge for wishes that cannot be fulfilled." Richard's fantasies seem of the latter type.

15. Jones (p. 254) calls attention to this compulsion to fulfill the "obligation of the name."

16. It may be objected that Richard simply reflects here the superstitious awe towards kingship common to the age. But there is a difference between sharing a mass-illusion about some one else and entertaining views of one's own omnipotence. Here again the intensity of the illusion is important: Richard really seems to believe his fantasy.

17. Fenichel (p. 425, citing Edith Weigert-Vorwinckel, "The Cult and Mythology of the Magna Mater from the Standpoint of Psychoanalysis," *Psychiatry*, I, 1938) remarks: "Deeper than modern man's dependence on the patriarchal father (and on father gods) is every man's biologically determined dependence on the mother, who took care of the infant during his passive-dependent period. Therefore, it is not rare that religious delusions of schizophrenics show materiaral features and resemble ancient mother religions."

18. I. B. Cauthen Jr., studies this aspect of the play in "Richard II and the Image of the Betrayed Christ", *Renaissance Papers* (Univ. of South Carolina Publication, 1954), pp. 45-57. He points out that the possible sources only suggest the parallel of Richard and Christ;

Shakespeare alone has Richard equate with Christ. Cauthen finds that the equation helps to develop the historic theme of Richard's martyrdom and build our sympathy, and that the extended image serves as a strong unifying device.

19. Samuel Kliger ("The Sun Imagery in Richard II", *SP*, XLV [1948], 196-202) remarks the significance of the sun searching out the sinners here: "So on Judgment Day will the sinner be found out by the eye of God."

20. The difference in tone between Richard's behavior here and that of a more normal man may be illustrated by Woodstock's response when he faces death (V. i. 131-135):

Thou canst not kill me villain!
 God's holy angel guards a just man's life
 And with his radiant beams as bright as fire
 Will guard and keep his righteous innocence.
 I am a prince. Thou dar'st not murder me.

Woodstock's claim to God's protection is based on his justice and innocence, not his status as an agent of God. Richard's claims, on the other hand, are part of the mystery with which he cloaks himself, as is characteristic of his complex (Jones, p. 251).

21. Jones, p. 260.

22. Jones comments on the assurance that people dominated by the complex have regarding their immortality (p. 261).

23. Jones, pp. 259-262.

24. For a discussion of the tendency to regress to formalistic thinking, see Bak, pp. 457-463.

25. Richard's childish resentment of Gaunt is characteristic of the narcissist, who resents a father image, a symbol of authority (Jones, pp. 261-262). Richard's characteristically subjective response here may be contrasted with that of Henry IV, who, in a comparable situation, remains intent on the issue even when Blunt is beguiled by Hotspur's appeal (*I Henry IV*, i. iii. 77f.).

26. Draper calls attention to this fact about Richard's character (p. 230): "He confesses his faults in moments of extravagant remorse, but does not seem actually to realize them . . . in fact he seems incapable of following any policy on anything."

27. See Fenichel, p. 437.

28. Fenichel, pp. 424-425. Fenichel (citing Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, London: Hogarth Press, 1928), speaking of the "salvations" achieved by the patient through these rebirth fantasies, observes: "The salvations frequently are experienced in a passive-receptive way, showing signs of the narcissistic *unio mystica*, of the deepest oral reunion of the subject with the universe, and the re-establishment of the original 'oceanic feeling'."

Notes on Raychaudhuri's "Jesus Christ and Sree Krisna."

by

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The problems of the writer utilizing psychoanalytic techniques and theories in obtaining greater understanding of a cultural phenomenon are, in a number of ways, quite similar to those of the analyst in that portion of his therapeutic task which involves the development of his own understanding of the patient. In both instances the investigator begins with the gathering and appraisal of material which is quite overt, and then, using his cultivated sensitivity, he strives to discern and evaluate material which is covert, not consciously recognized by the individual or by society, as the case may be.

Quite often the analyst will be able, fairly early in the analysis, to make (to himself) a tentative formulation of the patient's more significant psychodynamics. In fact, the analyst's own motivation to understand makes it almost inevitable that he do so, however, informally. Provided that he retains an open mind with regard to such a formulation, retains flexibility as to its revision, modification, and/or substitution, this natural process often makes possible a greater effectiveness in the therapy, for it tends to heighten the analyst's intellectual interest in his work.

In a similar fashion the analytic investigator of a cultural phenomenon may very legitimately formulate an hypothesis as to unconscious determinants and significances in his subject, the proving or disproving of which adds interest to the investigation.

In a psychoanalysis the principal difficulties which attend the development of a thoroughly valid and useful formulation

are sometimes of a countertransference nature, rather than of an intellectual nature. Given a number of possible ways in which the available data may be connected and organized, the analyst is not, of course, immune to influences of a subjective nature. Obviously these influences need not always be highly specific to the analyst's relationship to the particular patient under treatment, but may include factors of a more general nature, such as the wish for the patient not to be terribly ill or the wish to be especially penetrating and clever, to see what some other therapist might be unable to see. In the ordinary course of an analysis, the natural safeguard against erroneous formulations on the part of the therapist consists in the patient's responses as interpretations are gradually offered, or, to speak more accurately, in the patient's lack of responses. Probably the surest indication of the incorrect nature of a formulation of the analyst is afforded when an interpretation based thereon is productive of no response whatever.

In the case of the analytic investigator of a cultural phenomenon, the chief difficulties attending the development of an adequate formulation are apt to be analogous to the ones called countertransference difficulties in a therapeutic situation, i.e., they are apt to consist of the emotional biases of the investigator toward his subject or toward the process of investigation, itself. Here the analogy ceases, however, for there is no counterpart to the patient's behavior when offered an interpretation: no therapeutic trial is possible. Whereas in the analytic situation the physical presence of the patient makes it almost inevitable that formulations will be checked against fresh data, in the cultural investigation this burden falls entirely upon the investigator. There is the real danger that formulations will lead only to further speculation and will eventually come to be treated as facts.

It will be recalled that Freud, himself, fell into this trap when his formulations regarding some of Shakespeare's writings led him to speculate and then to become convinced that the Earl of Oxford was actually the author of the great plays. (An idea so highly improbable as now to be dismissed

by almost all serious critics, including such well-known analytic critics as Jones and Sharpe.)

In the field of cultural investigation, it may be that relatively little direct harm is done by so-called "wild analysis," since, after all, the subject-matter is usually academic. Indirectly, however, considerable harm may ensue to the science of psychoanalysis, for one of the most frequent and most serious criticisms faced by workers in this field is that of being cavalier with factual data and overenthusiastic and glib with speculation.

An instructive recent example of the pitfalls which beset analytic investigation of cultural phenomena is afforded by Raychaudhuri's interesting paper, "Jesus Christ and Sree Krisna," appearing in the Winter, 1957, issue of this journal (p. 389 to p. 405). In this essay the author first gives a brief description of some of the mythological features (of varying theological importance) surrounding the lives of these figures, then a fragmentary account of historical elements, and finally a fairly extended attempt to explain some of the mythological and theological features on the basis of the significance, both conscious and unconscious, of the historical features of the personalities of Jesus and Krisna. Throughout the paper the material is so arranged as to offer a running comparison and contrast of mythical, historical, and psychodynamic aspects of the life of Jesus with those of the life of Krisna. The discussion below will, from want of information, be essentially confined to Raychaudhuri's treatment of the life, personality, and myth of Jesus.

Under the heading, "Mythological," the author includes the following major points: (1) Jesus was born of a virgin mother, (2) His birth was attended by certain supernatural signs, (3) He performed such miracles as calming the storm on the Lake of Galilee and raising the dead, and (4) Jesus, himself, was physically resurrected from the dead. These features are, of course, among the more prominent elements of the Jesus-myth, and occasion no surprise in the reader.

On the other hand, it is a source of some surprise to find flat statements such as the following under the heading,

"Historical." (1) "Jesus . . . was left behind as a fatherless, forsaken child of a virgin¹ mother, to be reared up in his stepfather's poor home of a weaver." (2) " . . . his earthly father (was) . . . unholy, fallen, and unrighteous." (3) "The everlengthening black shadow of his unidentified father made him socially withdrawn and inactive." (4) "Because of his peculiar origin, society must have put a large number of limitations in his way." (5) "A sin of his parents and his peculiar socially despised origin were at the root of his almost obsessive appeal for repentance."

Curiously enough the reader is offered no information as to the source of this material. In order to demonstrate the relationship of the above statements, offered as data and not as speculation, with the available historical evidence, it may be helpful to summarize the latter.

The first point to be noted is that the most nearly contemporary written records pertaining to these matters, namely, the letters of Paul and the Gospel according to Mark, contain no reference whatever to the idea of Jesus's having been born of a virgin. Since the works of these authors appeared between the year 50 and 60 A.D., it is a reasonable - and, among scholars, a very generally accepted - inference that no such idea gained currency during the lifetime of Jesus nor during the twenty years following his death. As a matter of fact, Paul explicitly refers to the Davidic descent of Jesus as being generally accepted by everyone in the early church (Rom. 1:3), and there is no record of its having been challenged by other authorities of the time. (The idea of a specifically Davidic descent may be erroneous; the relevant point is merely that this material contains no hint of the supernatural.)

Three "biographies" of Jesus have been preserved from the period immediately following the writings of Paul and Mark: the Gospels according to Matthew, Luke, and John (ca. 65 to ca. 100). John makes no reference to the idea of a

1. In this context, as in similar contexts later in the paper, one assumes that the author is using "virgin" to mean "unmarried."

virgin birth. Whereas Matthew and Luke include references to this notion, it is quite clear from their accounts that it was then of very recent origin. For example, both Matthew and Luke present genealogies of Jesus traced backward through Joseph. In at least one of the old manuscripts of Matthew (the Sinaitic Syriac), the genealogy contains the following quite explicit statements: "Jacob begot Joseph. And Joseph, to whom was betrothed the virgin Mary, begot Jesus who is called Christ." (Here "virgin" is apparently used in the sense of "young woman" or "maiden.")

The only written record of the boyhood of Jesus is that contained in the second chapter of Luke. Among these verses are a number of references to Joseph, both by name and by very specific implication: "So they made haste and discovered Mary and Joseph and the baby . . ." (2:16a),² " . . . and when the parents of the child Jesus carried him in . . ." (2:27b), "His father and mother were astonished at these words about him . . ." (2:33), and others.

Of non-Biblical material pertaining to the Jesus of history, the principal source deriving from a professional historian in the *Antiquities* of Josephus (A.D. 37-ca. A.D. 95). This work makes no references to unusual circumstances in connection with the birth of Jesus. One passage, in fact, carries the implication that Jesus's family situation had been normal: "He (Ananus) called before it (the judicial council) the brother of Jesus - James was his name - and some others, and . . . gave them over to be stoned."

Jesus is also mentioned in the writings of Tacitus (55-117), Suetonius (65-135), and Pliny the Younger (62-113). None of these Latin sources contains material concerning the birth or parentage of Jesus.

The only records appearing to be consonant with the

2. Unless otherwise indicated, biblical quotations introduced by the present writer are from Moffatt, probably the most idiomatic version of the Bible in English. (*A New Translation of the Bible*, James Moffatt, D. Litt., Harper and Brothers, New York, 1935.) The *Revised Standard Version* has also been consulted for accuracy.

ideas of Raychaudhuri are a work of Origen and certain passages in the *Talmud and Midrash*.³ In his treatise, *Contra Celsum*, Origen, an Alexiandrian scholar who lived from 185 to 254, includes quotations from "the True Account of Celsus, a distinguished Roman of the time of Marcus Arelius." The original work of Celsus is no longer extant, but it is generally believed to have been written ca. 178. In Origen's treatise is a double quotation; Celsus is quoted as quoting a Jewish contemporary of his to the following effect: "Miriam [i.e., Mary] was divorced by her husband, who was a carpenter by trade, after he had found her to be guilty of adultery. She wandered around in disgrace from one place to another and gave birth to Jesus secretly. His father was a soldier by the name of Panthera. . ."

When one considers that Celsus obtained the above story about 150 years after the death of Jesus and that Origen's purpose in the doubly-quoted passage was essentially to portray an *attitude*,⁴ it becomes clear that the biographical value of this material is insignificant.

In *Talmud and Midrash* there are a number of references to Jesus, as well as a fair number of references to other figures which, in later centuries, came to be misinterpreted as references to Jesus. Since these writings were, themselves, the product of several hundreds of years, it is necessary to discriminate between various portions. The material transmitted by the *Amoraim* obviously had too late an origin (Third to Fifth Centuries) to be of historical significance.

The material of the *Tannaim* (authorities of the first two centuries) contains a number - perhaps a dozen - references to Jesus. Among them are statements similar to those quoted by Celsus. The father of Jesus is spoken of as having been a Roman soldier by the name of Panthera (Pantera,

3. The *Tol'doth Yeshu* is completely valueless as source material regarding the Jesus of history, having been written between the Fifth and Tenth Centuries and for non-historical purposes.

4. This passage has recently been utilized by Reik in his thought-provoking study, *Myth and Guilt*, but Reik makes it clear that he does not attach biographical value to the material.

Pandera, ha-Pantera are some of the variants), and the birth of Jesus is said to have been illegitimate. This Tannaitic material regarding the birth of Jesus is held to be untrustworthy by modern Talmudic scholars. It is considered to be the recording (largely during the Second Century) of oral material which had been developed for propaganda purposes. In other words, it was only *after* the Virgin birth myth had developed and had become an important part of the Christian message (i.e., after the writings of Matthew and Luke) that the illegitimate-birth story was developed as a counter-measure among orthodox Jewry.⁵

The likeliest explanation for the name of the alleged secret lover of Mary is as follows. Once the myth of the Virgin birth had been established, Jesus was frequently referred to as "the son of the Virgin." The Greek word for "virgin" (the Gospels attained their widest early circulation in Greek) is *parthenos*. *Panthera*, on the other hand, is the Jewish word for "leopard" or "wild-cat." Hence, by transposition of the "r" and the "n", the expression, *Jesus Ben Parthenos*, "Jesus, the son of the Virgin," could be turned punningly into *Jesus Ben Panthera*, "Jesus, the son of the wild-cat [she-cat]." In the course of years, the origin of the name was forgotten. Since, in the Near-East, a son is always called after his father, Jesus Ben Panthera eventually came to be understood as meaning "Jesus, the son of [a man named] Panthera," presumably a Roman.

The historically minded reader therefore can scarcely avoid the conclusion that our author's "historical" material is actually a *second myth* (having arisen slightly later than the first and in Jewish rather than in Christian circles), which he has substituted for the simple facts.

5. *Jesus of Nazareth*, Joseph Klausner, Ph.D., The MacMillan Co., New York, 1925. Also personal communication from Rabbi Samuel Sandmel, Provost and Professor of Bible and Hellenistic Literature, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. For a popular but essentially sound treatment of this and related questions, see Werner Keller's *The Bible as History*, William Morrow and Co., New York, 1952

The new myth is elaborated by the author along lines moving further and further away from documentation. To the primary points that Jesus was illegitimate and deserted by his natural father, are next added the points (quite independent of biological paternity) that Jesus was, in some important sense, "fatherless" and had exclusive possession of his mother during his developmental years. These ideas are presented to the reader, again as if they were facts, in such sentences as the following. "In all of the critical moments of his earthly life, Jesus was denied by his father . . ." "Jesus was a fatherless child, so there was no solid bond connecting him with the previous generation." "Jesus . . . got his mother all for his own."

As is the case with most aspects of the childhood of Jesus, the evidence on this point is limited. The material which is available, however, is contradictory of the notion of fatherlessness and of exclusive possession of the mother. Quite aside from such mythical aspects of the story as the Nativity, Joseph is shown to have been present from the first. As one scholarly modern exegete⁶ puts it, "Jesus's father and mother conformed to the practice of pious Jewish families by circumcising their son, presenting him in the temple, and offering a sacrifice for purification."

For the present question, the Biblical statements of the greatest relevance are the following: "When the parents of the child Jesus carried him in (to the temple) to perform the customary regulations of the law for him. . ." (Luke 2:27) and "Every year his parents used to travel to Jerusalem at the passover festival; and when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual to the festival. After spending the full number of days they came back, but the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know of this; they supposed he was in the caravan, and travelled on for a day, searching for him among their kinsfolk and ac-

6. S. MacLean Gilmour, Professor of New Testament Literature and Criticism, Queen's Theological College, in *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VIII, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952.

quaintances." (Luke 2: 41-45)

In other words, the narrative is explicit as to the presence of Joseph from the first days of Jesus' life through his twelfth year. Moreover, it requires only a minimum of imagination to see in Luke's sketch of the visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve the picture of a normal Jewish family of the period with its many collateral branches. It should be noted that - in marked contrast with the virgin-birth myth and the illegitimacy myth - this aspect of the record (the presence of Joseph and other relatives) *is particularly apt to be trustworthy, inasmuch as it is rather incidental*. That is to say, Luke's interest in this chapter is not centered upon the presence of Joseph. In the incident from which the first quotation was taken, Luke's concern is with the supposedly prophetic song of Simeon ("Nunc Dimittis"). In the second incident Luke's interest is in Jesus's precocious knowledge and sense of dedication ("... till all his hearers were amazed at the intelligence of his own answers," etc.).

Parenthetically, it is a quite likely speculation that Jesus lost his father during adolescence, since no mention is made of Joseph after Jesus's twelfth year. Even during this period, however, there is not the slightest possibility that Jesus "got his mother all for his own." The words of the villagers of Nazareth make this quite clear. "When Jesus had finished these parables he set forth and went to his native place, where he taught the people in the synagogue till they were astounded. They said, 'Where did he get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Is not this the son of the joiner [carpenter]? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? Are not his sisters all settled here among us? Then where has he got all this?' " (Matt. 13:53 - 56). Nor is there conflicting evidence on this point from any other contemporary source.

In addition to points, such as the ones just discussed, in which Raychaudhuri goes against the weight of evidence, there are other points of elaboration for which there could not, in the nature of things, exist any evidence, pro or con. The following sentences afford examples of this type of slip:

"As an unborn child, Jesus was left behind by his unknown father, in a *very cold and unaffectionate* manner,"⁷ and "... he [Jesus] was denied a carefree, passive, dependent life in infancy."

At this stage, then, our author has become convinced of the truth of what one might call a certain "genetic history" of the culture-hero, Jesus, which turns out, on more objective examination, to be of extremely high improbability. His conviction has reached the point at which phantasy material, such as the amount of dependency allowed Jesus as an infant, is presented as factual data.

There is, of course, as Sherlock Holmes remarked, nothing the matter with an improbable *theory*, so long as it is true, i.e., so long as it has the exclusive property of best explaining all of the known facts. In the present case, however, this "genetic history" is not presented as a theory with which to explain facts; *it is presented as constituting the basic facts, themselves*. What one is led to suspect is that our author "formulated the case," so to speak, very early in his acquaintance with the subject. The therapeutic analogy would be if the analyst were to make his formulation after spending a few moments with the patient, and were then to distort subsequent observations to fit the formulation.

Now our author's stated purpose is to utilize this genetic material to explain what one might term "the clinical picture." This is an undertaking which naturally has very great interest. All of us are desirous of learning more about what constitutes supreme genius, and analytic studies on this point are far from complete. In particular, there is room for serious analytically-oriented study of great religious figures. The whole "specificity question" is involved in such investigations, and there should be much to be learned therefrom. Unfortunately the doubts raised in the reader's mind by Raychaudhuri's presentation of the genetic history make it necessary to examine the accuracy of the clinical picture of

7. Italics mine.

Jesus here offered, before one can appraise the interpretation to follow.

As it turns out, one cannot go far into the clinical material without encountering a number of the author's statements⁸ which contradict one another. Here are some examples.

"Passivity is found to be the key note of Christ's life." (p. 396) "His attitude was vs. apologetic." (p. 396)

"Christ's whole life appears to be moulded according to the Old Testament." vs. (pp. 396-397)

"His religion asks for a denial of stern earthly realities." (p. 403)

"Christ's revolt . . . is shown by such of his utterances and accusations as, 'Think not that I came to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace but a sword.' " (p. 399)

"It was easy for him to assume the role of reformer, because of his ignorance of the past tradition. . . nor could he respect the traditions of which he knew nothing." (p. 399)

"Christ's advocacy of reconciliation: 'Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's.' " (p. 401)

Other aspects of the clinical description are contradicted not by the investigator, himself, but by massive evidence which is seemingly omitted from consideration. A particularly obvious error of this sort is the statement about Jesus's living "a life of a social recluse" (p. 399), to which are added a number of other comments giving the general picture that Jesus was an ascetic. Now the development of a strong ascetic trend in the Christian movement during the ensuing centuries is unmistakable and of high interest to the student of psychopathology, but to trace such a way of life to the example of the historical Jesus is unsound. It is almost literally possible to turn to any page whatever of the Gospel records and find refutation of this picture. (Nor is confirmation to be found elsewhere.)

8. One notes that these contradictions are not imposed by the personality of the subject, as may sometimes be the case. Here the subject's personality is complex but not especially contradictory.

Here are a few quotations to the point. "Why does he [Jesus] eat and drink with tax gatherers and sinners?" (Mark 2:16b) " . . . the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard . . .'" (Luke 7:34) "Male and female, He created them: hence a man shall leave his father and mother, and the pair shall be one flesh." (Mark 10: 6-8) In this matter, as in the question of the fatherly presence of Joseph, the New Testament is apt to be accurate, since the point was not considered one of great theological importance by the Evangelists. It was quite acceptable for a great prophet to be a recluse and an ascetic (Amos, John the Baptist), and so there would have been no motivation for the Gospel writers to have distorted the evidence on this score.

Another rather impressive distortion is introduced when Jesus is characterized as making "an almost obsessive repeal for repentance, as though repentance is the panacea for all earthly evils for which men suffer" (p. 401). As was the case with asceticism, the author appears to have confused trends in Christianity (having a complex origin) with characteristics of the historical Jesus. As it happens, there is a quite simple method of measuring the inaccuracy of the statement. A glance at a biblical Concordance reveals that in all of the Gospels combined⁹, the word, "repentance" (Gr. *μετάνοια*) is recorded as having been spoken by Jesus only twice, and the verb-form "repent" (*μετανοέω*) only ten times, of which three occur in parallel passages (i.e., passages in which one Gospel writer quotes another). In half of these instances, moreover, the usage is scarcely exhortatory.

The conclusion thus appears inescapable that our author found his original hypothesis - the idea that the personality of Jesus is explicable on the basis of his having been illegitimate and fatherless, etc. - so appealing as to preclude objectivity¹⁰ in the description of the clinical picture as well as in the presentation of genetic data.

One's attention is, however, drawn to a sentence (p.

9. Containing roughly 75,000 words.

400) which makes it appear worthwhile to continue the appraisal: "His (Jesus') religion is a religion of love, faith, and pious hope, of repentance and reconciliation." The point is, of course, that "faith, hope, and love" are generally considered to constitute the essence of the religion of Jesus. Provided he is using "pious" in its ordinary sense of "showing devotion to and faith in the Deity" (Webster), our author has given a rather accurate statement.

The question now becomes, Can our author's hypothesis, despite its improbability, shed new light upon the development of a creed of faith, hope, and love? The statement which Raychaudhuri links with the one just quoted, and which epitomizes his investigation, is as follows: "The new faith and the new religion that go by Christ's name was patterned by the deprivation of his own life." The idea of deprivation is carried over into the terminology of psychic structure in such expressions as, "the ego of Jesus could never grow fully to its normal stature," and "his superego could never be fully formed."

Whereas the paper under consideration has a very forceful beginning, "Jesus Christ and Sree Krisna are the world's two most outstanding personalities," it has neither a summary nor a conclusion. The lack is perhaps due to the logical *impasse* which has been reached. The hypothesis of serious infantile and childhood deprivation cannot be made to square with the development of "a most outstanding personality" and a credo of "faith, hope, and love." But, since the hypothesis has become more precious than the data, it cannot now be abandoned, no matter how great the need for a fresh start.

And yet, are not hypotheses expendable? As a colleague has aptly put it, in speaking of the broader problem, "Theo-

10. While it is not relevant to the present notes to inquire into the basis of this high degree of subjectivity, its existence is further confirmed by such expressions as the following: "... in the last scene the poor soul was crying out ..." and "he (Jesus) sang, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done.'" (Italics mine.) Here the unscientific note is **unmistakable**.

ries are attempts to generalize, to synthesize, to find order and regularity in the raw data. But they are not irreplaceable. They grow and change with the increase of observational data. However, unless the methods permit accurate observation of the phenomena of nature, they will sooner or later fall and be replaced by others. The whole history of science consists of constant changes in the hypotheses, the theories, the laws which have been derived from the data. Because of the nature of the observational data required in psychoanalysis, the problem of technique and experimental situation is crucial."¹¹

Perhaps the major contribution Raychaudhuri's paper makes is its exemplification of the difficulties which beset those of us who attempt to interpret cultural phenomena from the standpoint of depth psychology. These difficulties appear to be not very different in kind from those one encounters in treatment or in clinical investigation. Nor need the remedies be greatly different: an extension of self-understanding with regard to the area to be explored and the practice of checking the *data* with experts in the particular field would go a long way toward enhancing the value of such work as well as the psychiatrist's position in the eyes of other disciplines.


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11. Eugene Pumpian-Mindlin, M.D. in *Psychoanalysis as Science*, Stanford University Press, 1952.

On the Symbolic Significance of the Star of David

By

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Symbolization is a pars-pro-toto process in which an object - or one of its properties or conditions - is represented through a significant detail. The most primitive forms of symbolization consist of elementary visual signs referring to the body and its primary functions (3). Thus a  may represent the vagina, the woman, the process of birth, the womb or thoughts of death and eternity.

As mental life expanded and more abstract and complex thought-processes had to be expressed, these primary signs developed into condensed and intricate structures each detail of which - by some point of allusion (2), (4) - may connote several separate thoughts. Dream imagery is at this level.

However, no matter how complex the dream, its imagery can be reduced to basic archaic forms and their reference to the dreamer's body.

In the course of analyzing patients it came to our attention that many dream structures could be reduced to the form of a triangle, invariably symbolizing the public area and the dreamer's genitals.¹

A few brief examples may serve:

An elderly woman dreamt of a broom, denoting her hated domesticity as well as thoughts of her aging ("gathering dust"); at the same time, however, the underlying form

1. The triangle with the apex upwards would signify the penis, the downwards apex the vagina, although this position is often reversed in dreams.

suggests the idea of a triangle and a stick. At a deeper level the dream referred to problems of bisexuality and frustrated sexual wishes.



Figure I.

A young man dreamt of a threatening soldier, pointing a gun at him and wearing a Napoleon's hat. The triangular hat symbolized the patient's sexual aggression as well as his megalomania. A similar symbolism is implied in the image of the hourglass, (Fig. II) the corn sheaf, (Fig. III) a.o. One unmarried woman dreamt of the "entrance to a New England bridge"; this image referred to fantasies of coitus (the triangle and the two poles suggesting the pubic area and the two legs, connected with the idea of "entrance"), fantasies which were in contrast to her rigid ("New England") upbringing. (Fig. IV.)

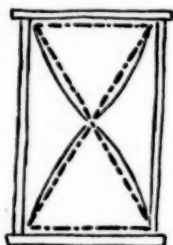


Figure II.



Figure III.



Figure IV.

Based on the above it caught our attention that the Star of David, which is composed of two triangles, must connote the principle of bisexuality.

Symbols, in the course of their development, acquire additional meanings. The Star of David, according to a number of sources (1), is not originally Jewish nor a symbol of monotheistic faith but originated in Assyrian-Egyptian culture and - like the five-pointed star - denoted the symbol for God. Sholem (5) writes that during the middle ages it slowly gained preference over the pentagram and - starting with Prague - became the flag-symbol and sign of redemption of Jewish communities all over Europe until it finally was adopted as the official symbol of Judaism at the Zionist Congress of Basle in 1897.

Whatever the Star may signify today, underneath its present meaning it still carries the connotation of bisexuality as is evidenced, for instance, in mythology and the cabalah. The Standard Dictionary of Folklore (6) states that "the symbol is a combination of the male and female triangle; it is said, in cabalistic writings, to comprise the signs of the four elements and the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, and thus it came to be the symbol for God. Since the biblical commandment puts a taboo on the use of the Name of God and on the depiction of God, the symbol was inscribed as the graphic representation of God in synagogues and wherever the Name was appropriate."

We come here upon the idea that the concept of Godliness, of complete power, is inherently linked to that of bisexuality, a connection which is familiar to us in another area: whenever we examine thoughts of grandiosity in our patients, we invariably find that they are based on the patient's unconscious belief in his bisexuality.

As a clinical analysis of this relationship falls beyond the intended scope of this paper,² we may restrict ourselves

2. A more detailed study on this topic is in progress.

to the following example:

One of our patients was raised by a hostile mother who actively suppressed his masculine strivings, threatening castration whenever he masturbated. He was forced into almost complete repudiation of his father, a drunkard, who was despised and dominated by his mother. Patient consequently fancied himself to be the product of an immaculate conception and unconsciously identified with Christ. During the course of treatment it became clear that Christ, to him, was a bisexual being, who represented both the phallic mother, the persecutor (Christianity as persecuting the Jews) as well as the weak father, the victim of crucifixion and castration.³ The identification with the God served as a way to carry out the mother's demands for castration while yet - through the idea of "resurrection" - remaining unassailable; in brief, the identification served as a defense against castration.

In this connection it is interesting to note that according to a number of sources (1), (5), the star, in its original use, was a talisman, which had - like for instance the mezuzah - a magical function. Sholem states that "the virtue of this seal as a talisman was always to accomplish one thing and one thing alone: to serve as a shield against the evil spirits".

Through psychoanalytical investigation we know, however, that the application of magic essentially serves as a means to ward off castration. Jones (3), for instance, states that "most charms, talismans and amulets are genital symbols, predominantly male. Just as they now bring good luck, or ward off bad luck, so in earlier ages they guarded against the evil powers of magical influences. That these apotropeic qualities were almost exclusively ascribed to genital symbols is due to two circumstances: first, the exaggerated

3. Further material substantiated the idea of psychic bisexuality. Through early erotization of the anal tract patient had conceived of the anus as his vagina and was left with the illusion that he was a man in front and a woman in the back, or as he put it, subject to a popular confusion, that he was a "split personality".

association in the primitive mind between the genital organs and the idea of power or potency; and secondly, the fact that originally nearly all evil magical influences were imagined to be directed against the sexual organs and their functions''.

CONCLUSIONS

The Star of David is the cultural expression of a psychological truth, deeply anchored in the human mind, namely that the thought of omnipotence, the adoption of "the sign of the God" is inherently linked to unconscious bisexuality and serves as a defense against castration. In this connection the



star takes its place among other signs containing the same universal symbols, such as the broadarrow



sign of the British sovereignty and the French Fleur-de-lis, the sexual symbol of the King-godship.



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